THIAGO • 300 FRONT-THREE GOALS • ANDY ROBBO • 2000/01 TREBLE ANNIVERSARY • NEIL MELLOR



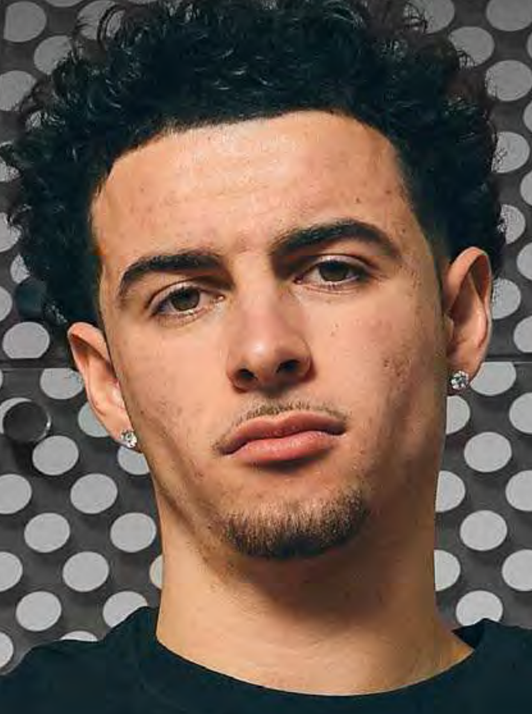






Official Liverpool FC Monthly Magazine





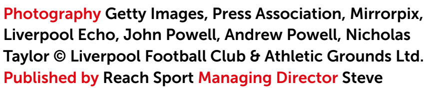

# CURTIS

THE FUTURE IS SCOUSE

# CONTENTS




**Reach Sport**
Editor David Cottrell
Assistant Editor William Hughes
Writer Chris McLoughlin
Production Editor Michael McGuinness
Design Colin Sumpter
Contributors Dave Ball, Ged Rea
Photography Getty Images, Press Association, Mirrorpix, Liverpool Echo, John Powell, Andrew Powell, Nicholas Taylor © Liverpool Football Club & Athletic Grounds Ltd.
Published by Reach Sport Managing Director Steve Hanrahan Commercial Director Will Beedles Executive Art Editor Rick Cooke Executive Editor Paul Dove
Marketing & Communications Manager Claire Brown
Printed by William Gibbons
Email liverpoolfcmag@reachsport.com.
To subscribe visit www.reachsportshop.com



## THE GOAL AT HIS MERCY

Mo Salah takes time out during a training session to examine the kind of netting he's more used to thumping footballs into. For the record, that's what he'd done no less than 123 times for Liverpool up to and including his goal at home to Newcastle.





## BROTHERS IN ARMS

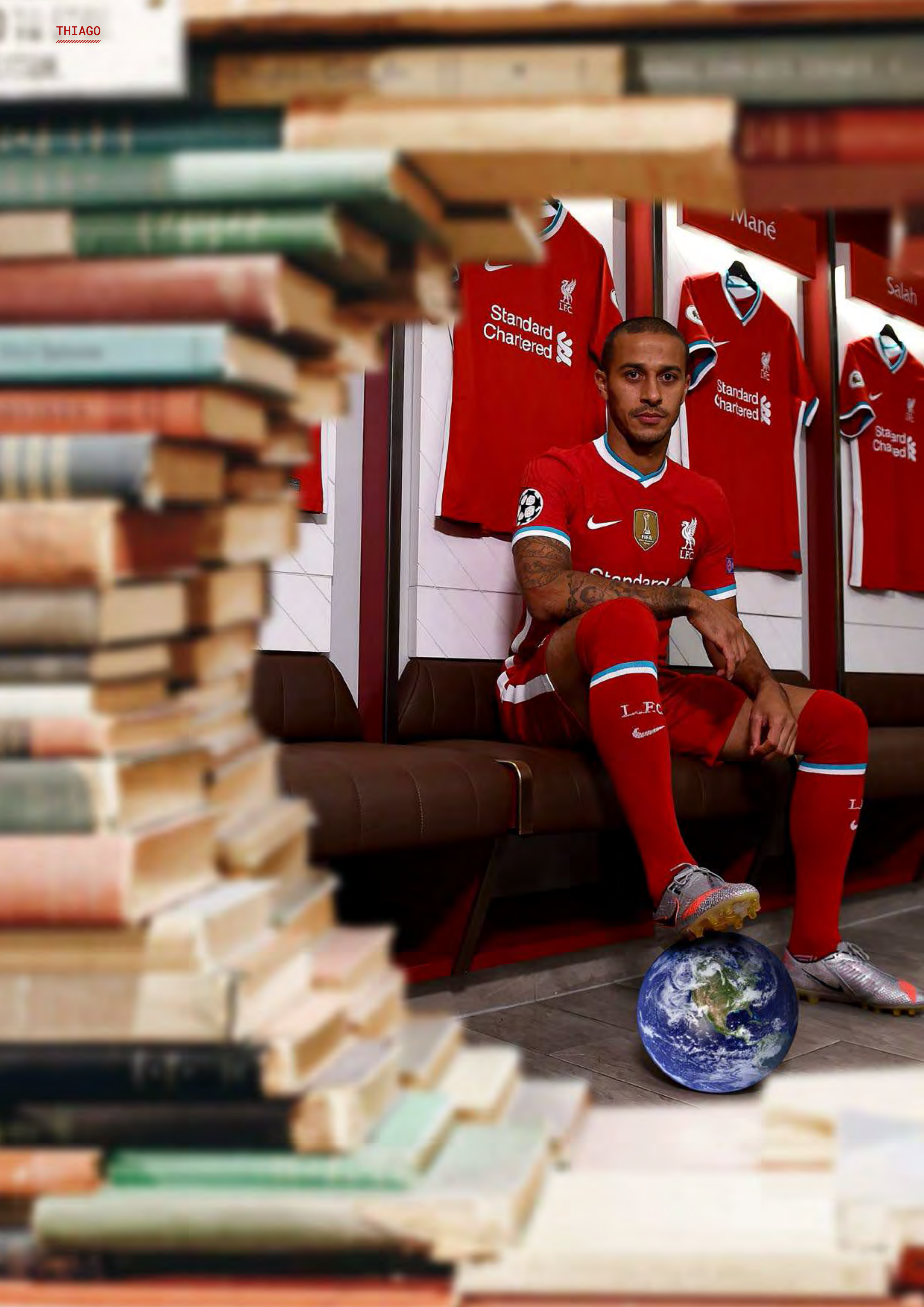
"Professional football requires hard work and can often give you more kicks than warm embraces," reflected Jürgen Klopp in one of his manager's columns in this season's matchday programme. "This is what makes it so intoxicating and why all of us in it feel so privileged. Being able to take the knocks together and get up off the canvas and strike back, together, is one of the best experiences you can have. We have always embraced the idea that through struggle can come joy...but critically you only achieve this through solidarity and togetherness."


48
5
3




**JUST BOSS**

No, it's not been an easy season on and off the pitch by any means. And yes, if it could go wrong, it's felt like it pretty much has throughout 2020/21. But football is as much about perspective as it is about fine margins – and if the outlook on life of this man doesn't cheer your heart and raise your spirits, then maybe this game's not for you.


Mané
Salah
Standard Chartered
LFC
Standard Chartered
L.F.C

# EDUCATED FEET

Born in Italy, raised in Brazil and Spain, refined in Germany and still learning in England with Liverpool… Thiago Alcantara on his global soccer scholarship

**WHAT HAS BEEN THE HARDEST THING FOR LIVERPOOL IN THIS MOST UNUSUAL OF SEASONS?**

I think that the biggest thing has been playing without any crowd. It's true to say that having a crowd [in the stadium] is part of the game for any club.

Part-and-parcel of football is having fans there supporting you, even when you play away from home, having the fans against you and our fans [supporting you] – even that is a motivating factor.

Without a doubt Anfield is a stadium that is recognised worldwide for its supporters and how they drive the team on and help us out in the moments when we most need them. So I do think it's been the number one issue, added to the strange situation in which the world finds itself currently.

**YOU HAVE SAID THAT IT WAS BIGGEST DECISION OF YOUR LIFE TO LEAVE BAYERN MUNICH – WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO MOVE TO LIVERPOOL FC?**

At the time it would have been easy for me to stay at Bayern because I'd grown accustomed to everything: the style of play, the type of training, the ease with which you consider both the city and the team to be like home when you know them both so well.

But in the end, in order to grow as a footballer, you like to give yourself new challenges and you want to have the learning-curve that comes with playing in a different league at a new club. Also to keep competing at the highest level in order to be able to win as many trophies as you possibly can.

That was the motivation behind my move, along with the manager they have here at Liverpool. I believe they were the reasons that brought me here.

**YOU MENTION JÜRGEN KLOPP AND YOU HAVE ALSO WORKED UNDER PEP GUARDIOLA – CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEM?**
Well, I always avoid making comparisons of any kind between managers, teams, cities, or whatever, but the two of them are at the very top because they are managers who always want to win, who analyse football very deeply and who know just how to analyse the game in the best way possible to suit the type of football they want to play.

What sets the great managers apart is the way in which they're able to put over their ideas as efficiently as possible to the players and ensure those ideas are taken on board. I believe that is the biggest strength that they both have. And so I'm very happy to have been coached by one of them and very happy to be being coached currently by the other.

**HOW HAVE YOU FOUND IT SO FAR PLAYING UNDER JÜRGEN KLOPP?**
Oh, it's amazing. You learn a lot and you have to play another different style of game than you played before and it's awesome because you have to learn and you have to adapt yourself and evolve with that.

Also to know that the team-mates that I have – with their quality – it makes you even happier to perform and play even better football.

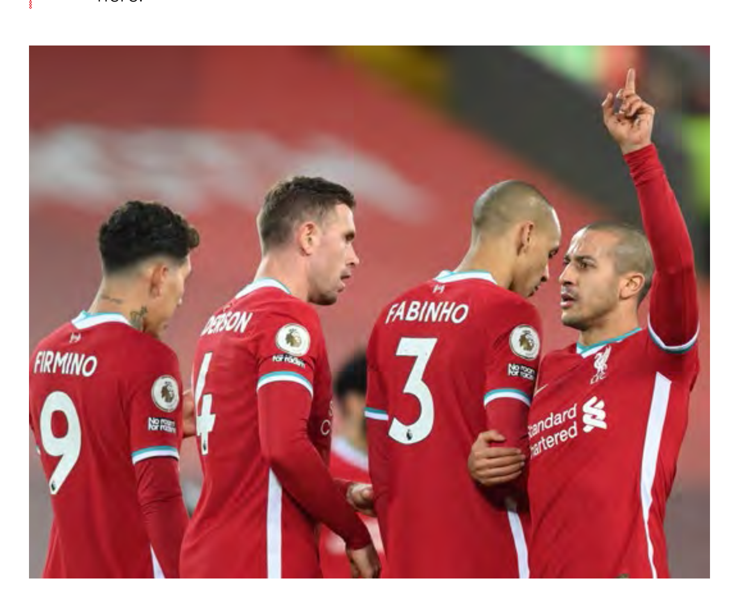
**WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS YOUR FAVOURITE POSITION OR ROLE IN THIS LIVERPOOL TEAM, DROPPING DEEPER OR PLAYING FURTHER FORWARD?**
For sure I feel most at ease in any position across the midfield, but it's true that if at any time the manager asked me to play out-wide then I'd try and be as versatile as I can to fulfil that duty. I'd even fill in in goal if it was needed!

But at the end of the day, I can adapt to what the team needs the most and any needs and requirements they might have.

**YOUR MIDFIELD PROFILE BRINGS SOMETHING A BIT DIFFERENT – DID THE MANAGER SAY ANYTHING ABOUT WHAT HE NEEDED FROM YOU WHEN YOU SIGNED?**
Something different I guess from the kind of players he had in midfield. I was something different and something they perhaps needed to try and give them a little more control.

But given that the team has of course benefited in recent times from a tremendous physical work-rate allied to their ability to get forward quickly and attack teams, we had that other option with me.

That's also why I came here, in order to be able to complement the requirements that the team had and to keep learning and developing as I fit into the way the midfielders play here.



**SINCE MID-MARCH FABINHO HAS BEEN MAINLY BACK IN MIDFIELD AND HAS MADE AN IMPACT – WHAT HAVE YOU MADE OF HIS PERFORMANCES?**

Fabio's an amazing player and he gives us a lot in the midfield with his intelligence and power which means he can help us in a defensive way and give us more freedom when we attack so we are very happy to have him there.

We have also seen that we can depend upon Fabio at centre-back as he has the defensive qualities required in football. He already played this way in the number six position in front of the back-four. Losing that player in front of the back-four means we lost the consistency that Fabio brings in that position and the freedom it provides you to play and get forward more.

We all still have the same defensive responsibilities but, in the same way, it is about the trust you have when you know the person behind you has played several years at the top level in that position. It's about the quality that we have and that he has and enjoying it together.

**LAST SEASON IT LOOKED AS THOUGH GERMANY HAD KNOCKED SPAIN OFF THEIR FOOTBALLING THRONE, WITH THREE OF THE FOUR CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SEMI-FINALISTS COACHED BY A GERMAN…**

I think the key is when a team or an actual coach himself has such an impact on a country's culture that it manages to assimilate a different style of football to that which was there before.

By that I mean that the German, Spanish, Brazilian, Italian and English leagues all have their own style of football, but when a manager or the kind of football played by a particular team has an impact and succeeds in merging and being absorbed into the existing style, that is when they are more successful.

Because then it means they always have different options of how to play. They can change things around tactically according to each game, and they know how to play against different sides from different countries.

## IN ORDER TO GROW AS A FOOTBALLER YOU LIKE TO GIVE YOURSELF NEW CHALLENGES IN A DIFFERENT LEAGUE AND WITH A DIFFERENT CLUB




Standard
Chartered
6
L.F.C.
L.F.C.

**WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED MOST FROM EACH CLUB YOU'VE BEEN AT?**

I think my time at Barca was not just a football education but more of a well-rounded learning experience where I grew as a human being and also on a personal level.

That was because we were taught from a young age to respect the opposition, our team-mates and our coaches and everyone who were around us at that time of our lives. They do an amazing job with the academy kids on that side of things, but then in football terms they provide you with basic concepts about the tactical side of the game, such as possession of the ball, to want the ball and look after it when you get it. And to keep a cool head when you are close to goal. They are the key areas.

Then at both Bayern and now Liverpool, you keep working on the different tactical ideas and plans you are given by the coaches and team-mates that you have at the time.

**WITH YOUR FATHER [1994 WORLD CUP-WINNER MAZINHO] PLAYING IN ITALY AND SPAIN, YOU SPENT YOUR CHILDHOOD IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES – HOW WAS THAT EXPERIENCE?**

Well it's amazing to have had the option to live in different countries. You can learn different cultures, you can have friends from different nations as well.

But football-wise, when you are young, you don't think about that – you just have fun with your friends while you are playing football. And when you grow up, you notice those opportunities that you've had – to play futsal in Brazil and then play the Spanish way too and I think that's amazing.

**YOU'VE WON THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE TWICE AND NINE LEAGUE TITLES AND JOINED A CLUB THAT'D WON THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE AND PREMIER LEAGUE IN THE LAST TWO SEASONS – DOES THE HUNGER FOR SUCCESS EVER DISAPPEAR?**

No, it doesn't. The truth is that you satisfy your hunger not just by winning trophies but also by the games that are coming up next. You find fulfilment in your very next match.

Hunger has a very short memory. Because it's a kind of hunger that right now isn't about to run dry. The next opportunity is the next game. As soon as one game is out of the way, we immediately think about the next one.

The key to all this is – how can I put it – just to take things from day to day, focusing on the next game, and then hopefully to be able to say at the end of the season: "I've won this trophy."



MY TIME AT BARCA WAS NOT JUST A FOOTBALL EDUCATION BUT A WELL-ROUNDED LEARNING EXPERIENCE, THEN AT BOTH BAYERN AND LIVERPOOL YOU KEEP WORKING ON DIFFERENT IDEAS AND CULTURES



**WHAT ASPECT OF YOUR GAME DO YOU THINK YOU NEED TO IMPROVE TO BE 100 PER CENT SETTLED-IN AT LIVERPOOL?**
For me, right at the start it was all about the pace of the game. I think that in the other leagues that I'd been accustomed to playing in, I'd been used to having a moment in the game to take a short breather here and there, but here you don't get a minute and there are no gaps. So that was the difference.

But now with VAR, everything stops here a bit more too and so you get to catch your breath for a while too. But that was the little difference I have found that there is between the leagues.

**WHO IS THE OPPONENT WHO HAS MOST SURPRISED YOU?**
I don't know, I don't think there has been an individual player who has surprised me but there have been groups of players who form a team that have surprised to the extent that you say: "They are playing better than I expected."

I don't think it's just the one team but all of them, and you can easily see the difficulties that you can have when you play any one of the teams from the top of the league right through to the bottom. That's something that's probably surprised me the most.







THERE ARE SEVERAL GAMES WHERE WE DIDN'T GET THE RESULT WE WANTED AND DIDN'T DESERVE TO LOSE, BUT THAT CAN HAPPEN IN FOOTBALL AND WE JUST LOOK FORWARD





**AND HAS ANY MANAGER STOOD OUT FOR HOW HE'S SET UP FOR A GAME?**

No, not really a manager as such. As I say, it's more the teams that have surprised me by having that quality and tactical game-intelligence during a match and you feel they have surprised you in that sense, more than in other ways.

By that I mean that you have teams who defend and use the long-ball, and it's surprised me just how well they can do that. That's why in general the Premier League has been a surprise to me.

**HOW FRUSTRATING HAS THIS SEASON BEEN FOR YOU AS A GROUP OF PLAYERS?**

Yes, for sure, it has because there are several games that we played to win but we didn't get the result we wanted. I don't think we have deserved to lose some of the games that we have either, so it was very frustrating to not get those three points, especially when we felt we had played better than the other team.

But that can happen in football and we are always aiming to get better and so we just look forward to the next game and trying to perform as best as we can.

**DO YOU HAVE ANY FOOTBALLING DREAMS STILL LEFT TO FULFIL?**

Yes: to win the next game. Dreams are what we have more as youngsters and so, as we get older, we become a little bit more realistic and go for more short-term objectives!

I am a short-term-goal guy, so I am looking forward just to the next game, to win the three points and then we'll see what comes next.

## THREE AMIGOS

**Thiago and his brother Rafinha grew up as good friends with the Leeds United forward Rodrigo, so it was a disappointment for the Reds no6 not to come up against his fellow Spanish international in the Premier League at Elland Road last month. Rodrigo was ruled out with a muscular injury.**



Rodrigo (second from right) moved to Spain at a young age when his father, the Brazilian footballer Adalberto, partnered Thiago's dad Mazinho in opening a football school in Vigo. Mazinho had played for Celta Vigo between 1996 and 2000 and Rodrigo became good friends with the Alcantara brothers.

Rafinha (second from left next to Thiago), who is two years younger than his brother, now plays for Paris Saint-Germain after making a move from Barcelona in October.

Thiago and Rodrigo have come up against each other before, though, in a Champions League group game in December 2012.

"Yes, it was Barca v Benfica [a 0-0 draw] and my brother also played!" Thiago recalls.

"These are special games where you have to put aside the fact that there is a person you are close to on the pitch, because you have to compete against him. After the game is when you can look back, chat and laugh about what happened along with those involved, in that case my brother and Rodrigo.

"Hopefully we can play against each other next season! It would be special to face Rodrigo. He moves like nobody behind the lines and he has a quick shot with his left foot. He's an outstanding player."



AXA
LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB
YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE
EST·1892
Official Training Partner
AXA TRAINING CENTRE
Know
You Can



## HEAD OF CLASS

"I'll be honest," Nat Phillips says, "I've tried not to look that far ahead. At the moment I just want to be concentrating on the games when they come along. Only at the end of the season can I start considering what it might mean for me. The most important thing at the moment is just to be putting in those good performances and helping the team when I am called upon."




## TIPS FROM THE TOP

"As a defender," Ozan Kabak tells the club's official website, "you need to smell the danger and see it before it happens. That's exactly what I'm trying to do – but it's about experience, too. Our friend Virgil [van Dijk] is so good at this job. He does it very well because he's a really experienced guy and he knows this football. So I tried to do my best and game by game I think I got better on this."


L.F.C.
Standard
Chartered
L.F.C.
L.F.C.




## Mo Salah, Bobby Firmino and Sadio Mane have now scored 300 goals for the Reds across six competitions – fancy a few highlights?

**Liverpool FC's revered front-three chalked up a significant milestone in the 1-1 draw at Leeds United last month. Sadio Mane's first-half strike at Elland Road meant that he, Roberto Firmino and Mohamed Salah had shared 300 goals for the Reds in all competitions.**

Salah led the way with 122 of that number, scored in the shortest time, 197 games, as he only arrived from AS Roma in June 2017.

Firmino, signed from Hoffenheim two summers earlier, has the most assists of the trio, with 61 and has also contributed 84 goals into the mix.

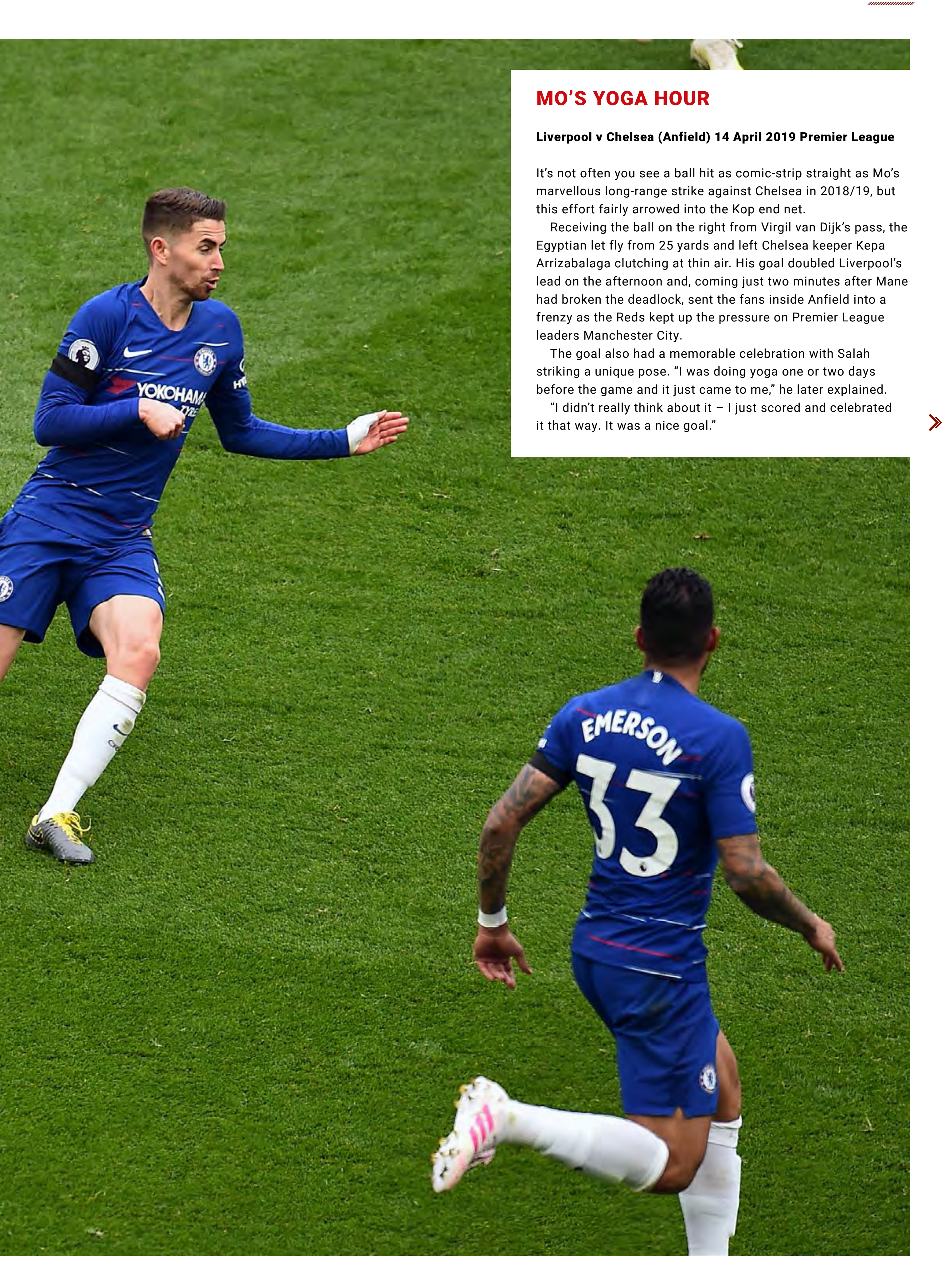
Mane, who joined from Southampton in June 2016, scored his 94th Liverpool goal in West Yorkshire, a tally which arrived in 212 appearances.

"It is really exceptional," said manager Jürgen Klopp. "Imagine where I would be if these boys would not play for me—wow. The situation minus their goals, crazy."

Salah wasted no time in setting the trio on their way towards the 350-mark, scoring just three minutes into the Reds' next game against Newcastle United, a goal which also brought up 250 for Liverpool under Klopp in Premier League football at Anfield.

The Reds' remarkable attacking triumvirate have scored their goals across six different tournaments, and here we look at some of the best in those various competitions.


M.SALAH
11




## MO'S YOGA HOUR

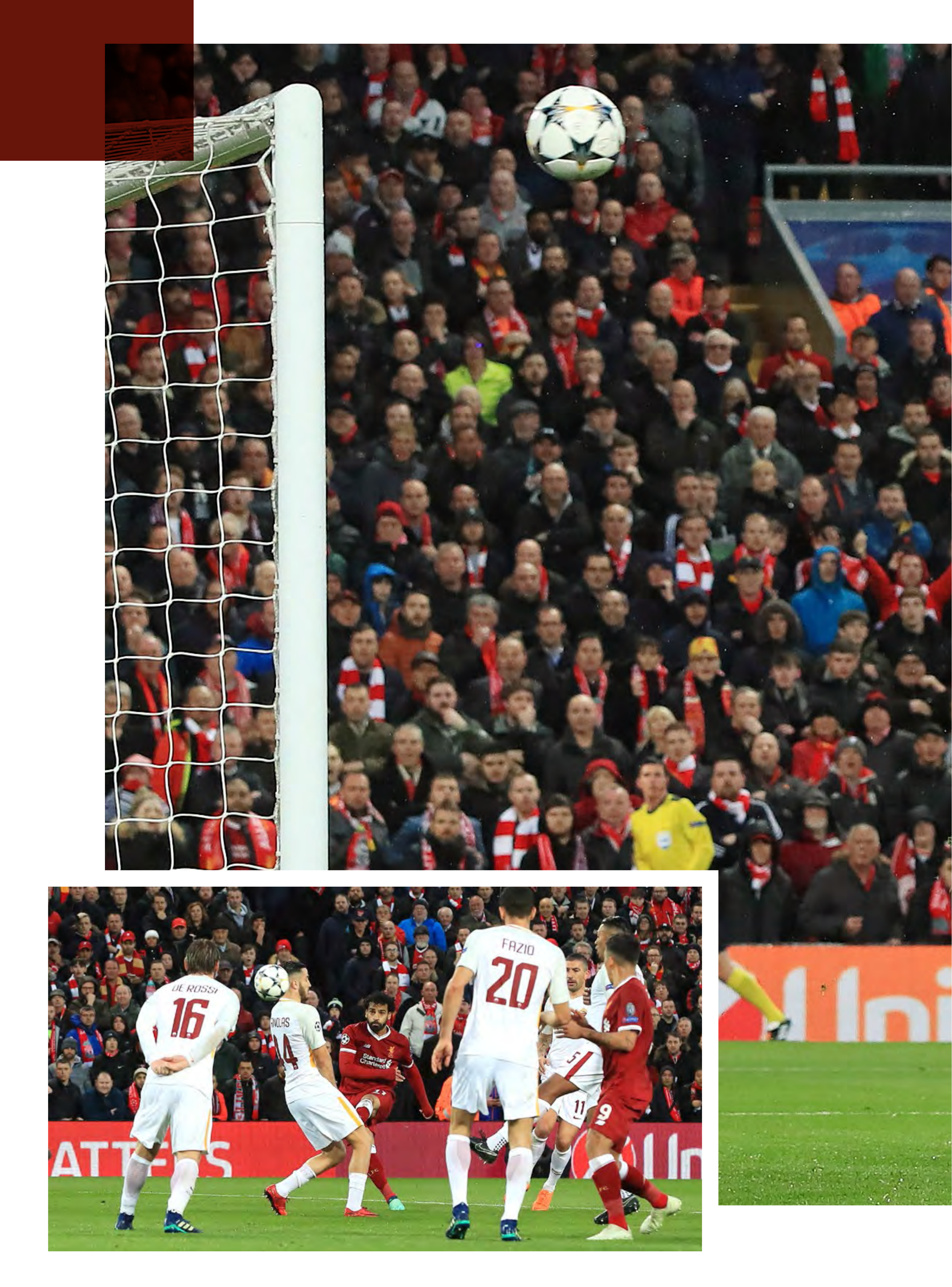
**Liverpool v Chelsea (Anfield) 14 April 2019 Premier League**

It's not often you see a ball hit as comic-strip straight as Mo's marvellous long-range strike against Chelsea in 2018/19, but this effort fairly arrowed into the Kop end net.

Receiving the ball on the right from Virgil van Dijk's pass, the Egyptian let fly from 25 yards and left Chelsea keeper Kepa Arrizabalaga clutching at thin air. His goal doubled Liverpool's lead on the afternoon and, coming just two minutes after Mane had broken the deadlock, sent the fans inside Anfield into a frenzy as the Reds kept up the pressure on Premier League leaders Manchester City.

The goal also had a memorable celebration with Salah striking a unique pose. "I was doing yoga one or two days before the game and it just came to me," he later explained.

"I didn't really think about it – I just scored and celebrated it that way. It was a nice goal."


DE ROSSI
16
FAZIO
20




## SEMI-FINAL SENSATION

**Liverpool v AS Roma (Anfield) 24 April 2018**
**Champions League**

A goal that Mo (and Alisson Becker!) is unlikely to forget in a hurry. With Liverpool bidding to reach the UEFA Champions League final in the 2017/18 season, Salah took the semi-final first leg at Anfield by the scruff of the neck with a couple of goals and two assists as the Reds raced into a 5-0 lead before eventually being pegged back to 5-2.

Football fans love a goal that goes in via the intersection of post and crossbar and this was a very special strike. Picking the ball up on the right of the area from Firmino's pass, the no11 took a couple of touches before curling an unstoppable left-footed shot beyond his future team-mate to open the scoring against his former club.

## CHELSEA DAGGER

**Liverpool v Chelsea (Istanbul) 14 August 2019 UEFA Super Cup**

Sadio put the Reds ahead in extra-time of this all-English clash in the Turkish capital as Liverpool went on to prevail 5-4 in a penalty shoot-out against UEFA Europa League winners Chelsea.

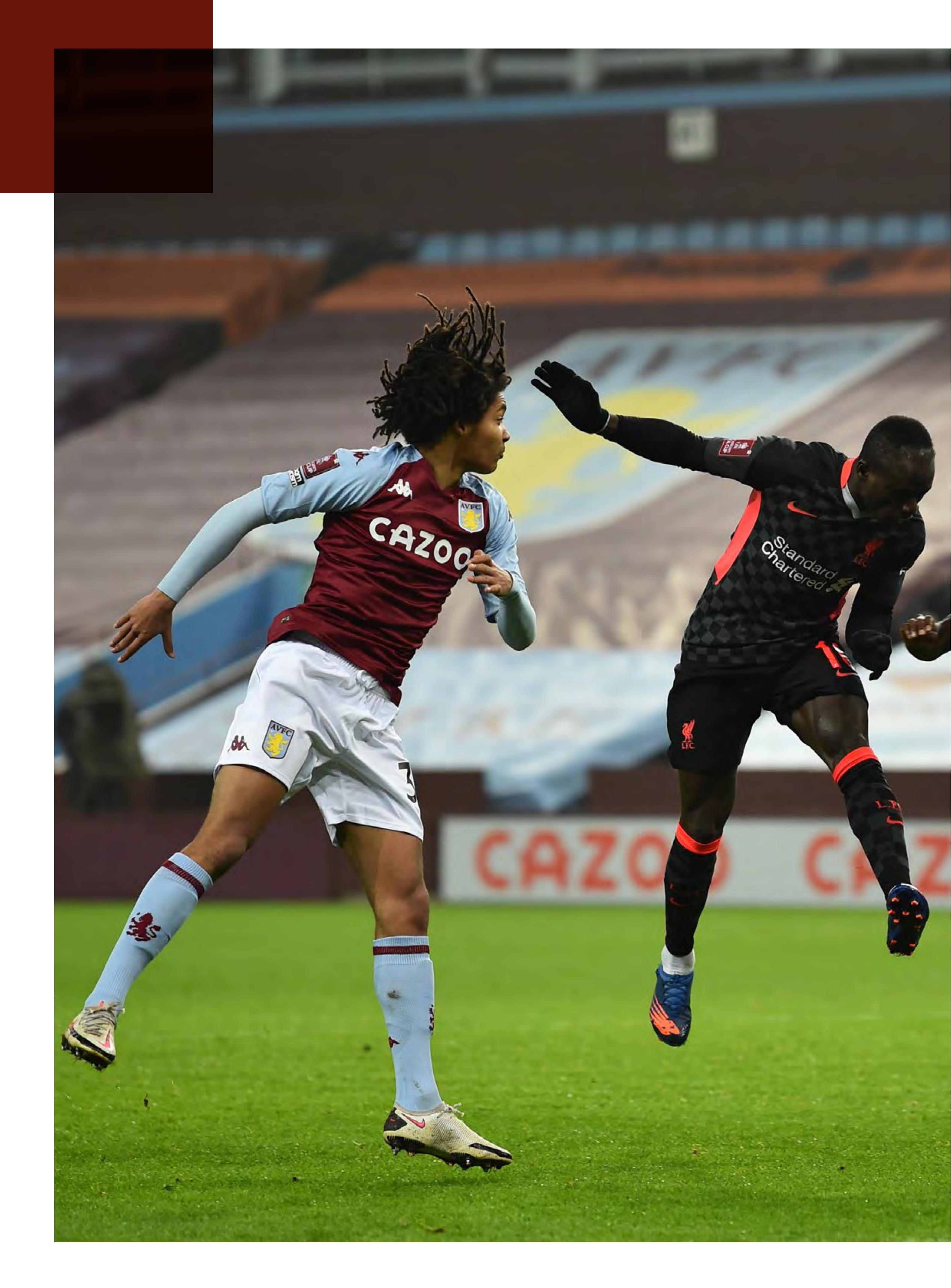
Mane had struck early in the second period to cancel out Olivier Giroud's first-half opener, but his effort in the period of over-time was the pick of his double at Besiktas Park.

It rounded off a wonderful piece of attacking play as he released Firmino down the left before continuing his run into the penalty area. When the Brazilian cut the ball back into his path, Mane opened his body out and placed an unerring first-time, side-footed finish beyond Chelsea keeper Kepa Arrizabalaga and into the top corner.

The Senegalese star was substituted before the shoot-out but new team-mate Adrian was Liverpool's hero, enabling Sadio and his fellow Reds to add more winners' medals to their growing collection.




10
L.F.C.
ISTANBUL
2019


AVFC
Standard Chartered




## VILLA THRILLER

**Aston Villa v Liverpool (Villa Park) 8 January 2021 FA Cup**

Sadio scored his first FA Cup goals for the Reds in January's third-round win over a young Aston Villa side.

With a bout of COVID-19 infections decimating the Villa squad, the hosts were forced to pick a team of academy youngsters – seven Under-23s and four U18s – but they still made the Reds work hard for their 4-1 victory.

Mane opened the scoring after just 195 seconds, leaping to produce a fine header to convert Curtis Jones' inviting cross which had been curled into his path from the right flank.

He added a second after the break with another header, stretching his neck muscles to cleverly loop the ball beyond keeper Akos Onodi after being picked out by a pinpoint cross by Xherdan Shaqiri.


13
TEMPOBET

## GONE FOR A BURTON

**Burton Albion v Liverpool (Pirelli Stadium) 23 August 2016**
**League Cup**

It's a slightly surprising statistic that this is the only goal scored by any one of the trio in the League Cup.

Bobby was sporting a natty ponytail as he got his head to a Nathaniel Clyne cross to put the Reds two goals to the good inside 22 minutes of their second-round date in Staffordshire. He cushioned his effort from six yards into the net after home goalkeeper Stephen Bywater failed to gather the centre from the right.

Mane, who also started the game against a Burton team managed by former Reds star Nigel Clough, supplied two assists as Jürgen Klopp's men defeated the Championship side 5-0 at the Pirelli Stadium.

"We were much sharper around the box," said Klopp afterwards. "We were where we needed to be – the boys were in the box for the first two goals."













## TOP OF THE WORLD

**Liverpool v Flamengo (Khalifa International Stadium)**
**21 December 2019 FIFA Club World Cup**

A goal that created a little bit of history as it helped Liverpool to finally claim the Club World Cup.

The Reds had tried – and failed – on three previous occasions in the competition's various guises, but 2019 was to be their year as one of Liverpool's brilliant Brazilians helped them see off Brazilian opponents thanks to a goal in extra-time of the showpiece occasion in Qatar.

In a dramatic conclusion to normal time, Liverpool had seen an injury-time penalty decision overturned after Mane had gone down under a challenge from defender Rafinha. However, referee Abdulrahman Al Jassim reversed his initial verdict after checking the pitchside monitor following a consultation with the video assistant referee – much to the Reds' disbelief.

However Bobby Firmino, who'd scored a dramatic injury-time winner in the semi-final against Monterrey, was Liverpool's hero again when he produced a composed finish after being played in brilliantly by Mane.

His goal helped the Reds claim their third piece of silverware in just over six months and gave them the tag of champions of the world for the first time in the club's rich history.

## THE 300 CLUB

(up to and including 19 April 2021)

### SALAH:

Goals/games: 122/197
Assists: 41
Goal involvements: 163
Hat-tricks: 3

### MANE:

Goals/games: 94/212
Assists: 34
Goal involvements: 128
Hat-tricks: 1

### FIRMINO:

Goals/games: 84/286
Assists: 61
Goal involvements: 145
Hat-tricks: 1









Work Together.
Stand Together.
**Achieve Together.**

**Find out more at**
**liverpoolfc.com/RedTogether**






A KID LIKE
CURTIS



Local lad Curtis Jones is still learning and always improving while his army of admirers continues to grow

Words: Chris McLoughlin

**From silverware in 2019 and 2020 to looking for silver linings in 2021, it hasn't been the season Liverpool supporters had hoped for. Yet history hints that one silver lining of Liverpool's 2020/21 campaign will go on to get his hands on silverware in the future. That silver lining is Curtis Jones.**

It has been a breakthrough season for the Scouse midfielder. At the time of writing he has made over 30 first-team appearances and contributed four goals and four assists.

Significantly Jones has made 20 starts – a huge step up on the six he made during season 2019/20 – but he will end the season without any winner's medals to add to the Premier League and FIFA Club World Cup honours he collected a year earlier. It may not feel like it right now, but this bodes well.

How many trophies did Liverpool win during Robbie Fowler's breakthrough season in 1993/94? None. How many trophies did Liverpool win during Jamie Carragher and Michael Owen's joint-breakthrough season in 1997/98? None.

How many trophies did Liverpool win during Steven Gerrard's breakthrough season in 1998/99? None. How many trophies did Liverpool win during Trent Alexander-Arnold's breakthrough season in 2017/18? None.

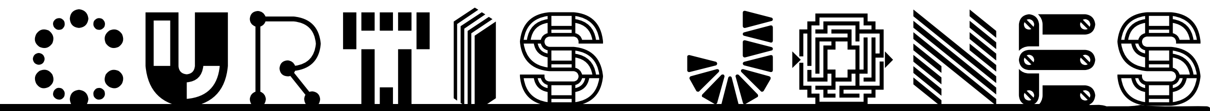
How many trophies have they won between them since those breakthrough seasons? Thirty-one. And four of those five Liverpool FC Academy graduates – Fowler (1995 and 96), Owen (1998), Gerrard (2001) and Alexander-Arnold (2020) – went on to be named as PFA Young Player of the Year with Gerrard later voted as PFA Player of the Year (2006) and FWA Footballer of the Year (2009) and Owen lifting the Balon d'Or as European Footballer of the Year in 2001.

There are no guarantees in football. Just because other Academy talents have gone to achieve collective and individual success with Liverpool after winning nothing in their first-team breakthrough season, doesn't mean that Jones will go on to do the same. But can you spot the trend?

Introducing young, developing players into a side can often be initially detrimental to a team's collective success. That's no slight on Jones – nor Fowler, Carragher, Owen, Gerrard or Alexander-Arnold for that matter – but it is a reality that inexperienced, young players need time to progress and deal with all manner of things from the physical demands and tempo of top-flight football to being under the spotlight and part of a team expected to win every game.

It's something Jones, who turned 20 in January, understands. "I'm still trying to learn exactly how the gaffer wants me to go and play, and how disciplined I have to be if I don't have the ball," he said. "So I think the more games I play the better I'll become, the more confident I'll get and the more I will learn my role.

"As soon as I've got all that 100 per cent, that's when I can start to






I'M STILL TRYING TO LEARN EXACTLY HOW THE GAFFER WANTS ME TO GO AND PLAY, AND HOW DISCIPLINED I HAVE TO BE IF I DON'T HAVE THE BALL

give everything that I've got, but at the minute it's just about trying to get into the team and stay in the team before I start doing anything out of this world."

That's not to say he hasn't caught the eye of many shrewd judges this season. Some pundits believe the impact that Jones has made has gone a little unnoticed due to Liverpool's results not living up to those in previous seasons and subsequently dominating agendas.

"Someone like Curtis Jones has gone under the radar, because of the way they've performed, but he's an unbelievable find," Arsenal legend Ian Wright said on *The Kelly And Wrighty Show*. "The way they have brought him in...he looks so comfortable in any scenario they put him in.

"Once it starts getting going and Liverpool can get on that winning run he's only going to get better. You have to say it's testament to Klopp and his team for the way they've put him through. It's brilliant management."

Former Spurs, Marseille and England winger Chris Waddle agrees. "He's a good player," he told BBC Sport. "He sees the game. His first touch, his awareness, his energy levels. Everything about him. He's got it all. He's a player who has got to be on Gareth Southgate's radar."

A place in England's Euro 2020 squad might be a step too far at this stage of his career – if Alexander-Arnold doesn't get a call-up it must be the greatest England squad since 1966 – but Curtis has made an impact for England U21s, scoring twice in European Championship qualifiers this season.

Receiving a post-match red card for a scuffle with Croatian players after netting against them in March was a blemish on his disciplinary record, but even that incident has been viewed by Jürgen Klopp has part of the learning-curve he is on.






"If the other team hasn't done anything I'm sure Curtis wouldn't have reacted, so there were some words or signs or whatever, but still Curtis didn't behave right in that moment [and] he knows that," said the Liverpool manager.

"If you ask him if he would do it again he would say no, but he did it. As far as I know, it was not that bad. It's okay, I will speak to him. The only thing you do about the mistakes you make in life is learn from it and he will."

Learning how to deliver his best displays consistently is another part of his trade for Jones to master. Back in December, he turned in a man-of-the-match display as the Reds beat Spurs 2-1 in front of 2,000 supporters at Anfield.

Belgium manager Roberto Martinez, working as a pundit for Amazon Prime that night, described Curtis as "the best and most influential player for Liverpool" while fellow analyst and ex-Red Peter Crouch was also impressed. "I thought Curtis Jones was magnificent tonight," he said. "It's the best game I've seen him play in a Liverpool shirt. He was everywhere."

A fortnight later, however, it was a schoolboy error from Jones that led to West Bromwich Albion equalising to claim a 1-1 draw at Anfield, a result that began a run of only one win in 11 Anfield games for the Reds.

"I tried to dribble in an area that I shouldn't have and I gave the ball away, corner and goal," he admitted. "You can look at that as I've cost the team there."

Such errors have been rare and it is at the other end of the field where Jones has made a real impact. In early 2021 he created goals

I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S THE SAME FOR OTHER PLAYERS, BUT I'VE ALWAYS SAID THAT I'M A PLAYER WHO IS CONFIDENT OF SCORING OR GETTING AN ASSIST... I DON'T WANT TO BE A NUMBER IN THE SQUAD – I WANT TO BE COUNTED ON




for Mo Salah (after coming on at West Ham) and Sadio Mane (at Aston Villa and against RB Leipzig in Budapest), while his opening goal at Bramall Lane against Sheffield United added to strikes against Lincoln City (in the Carabao Cup) and Ajax (in the Champions League) earlier in the season.

Contributing in such a tangible way is something that Curtis is keen to do more regularly. "I am a versatile player and I don't mind where I play for Liverpool – I just want to play a part. I don't want to be a number in the squad – I want to be counted on.

"We've got a big squad and a lot of quality players, but I go into training every day of the week, give 100 per cent and just try to catch the manager's eye. Liverpool have a lot of players who can score goals and create goals. If I want to get into the team I've got to give a bit more, so that's what I'm trying to do.

"Contributing is massive for any team and for any player because the team, and the people around it, count on players. I'm not saying that I'm counted on massively as a player, but I've still got that thing around me where I can come on and score or assist.

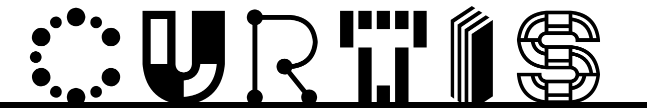
"That's why I was used at West Ham and I was happy that I came on and got an assist straightaway. After that the boys took their games to a different level and we came away with a great win.

"I don't know if it is the same for other players, but I've always said that I'm a player who is confident of scoring or getting an assist. Now I want to be counted on as a player."

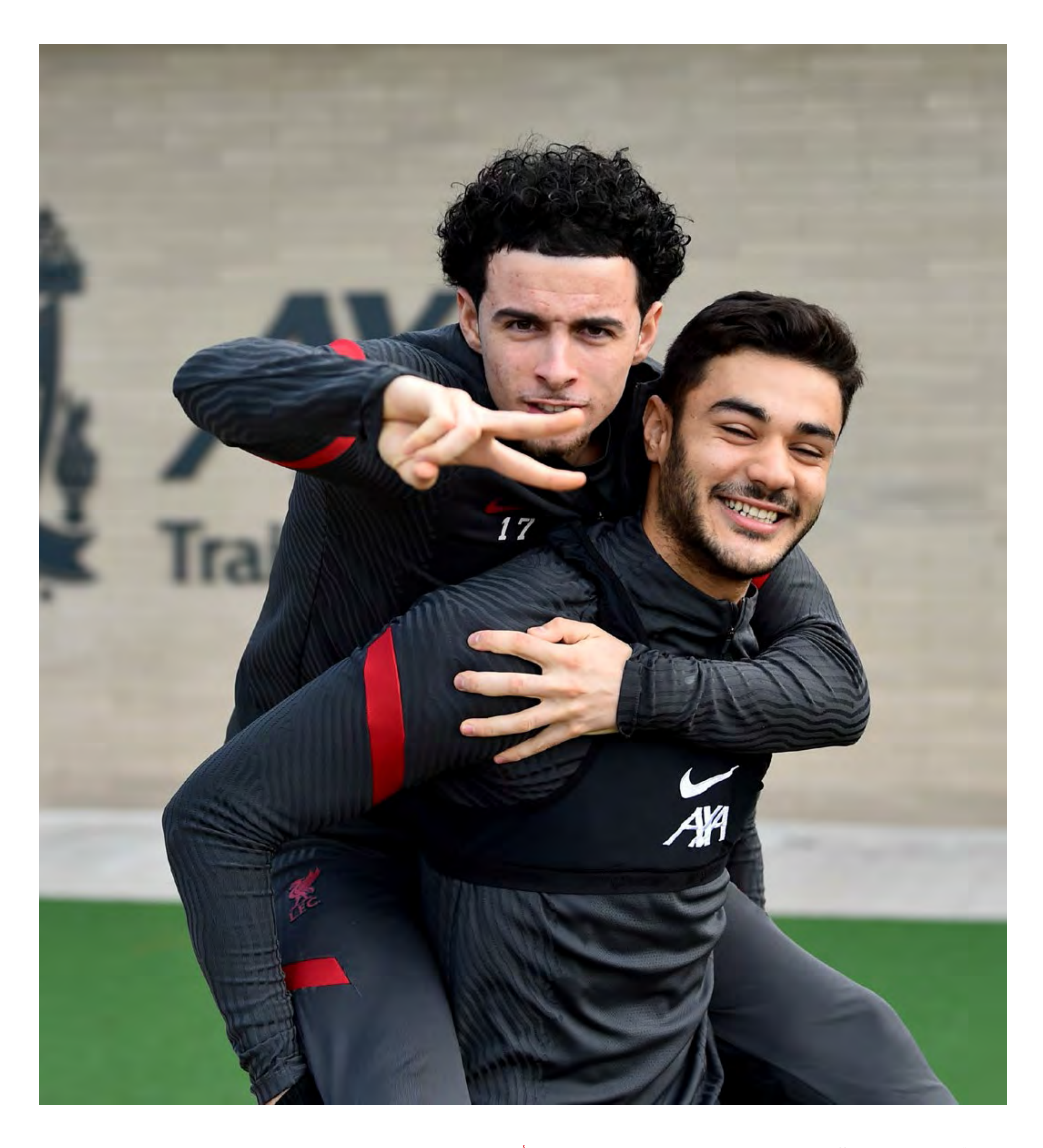
Such contributions have left a lasting impression. In the midweek after the 3-1 win at West Ham the Reds were beaten 1-0 at Anfield by Brighton. Curtis spent the opening 78 minutes of that game on the bench, something former Liverpool goalkeeper David James was surprised about.

"I was covering the West Ham match and the first half for that game








was similar to the 90 minutes we saw against Brighton. We talk about fatigue, but the one player that stood out to me – of course Salah scored a couple of goals – was Curtis Jones.

"I'm surprised he didn't start and even more surprised he went on so late in the game to try and get something out of it."

Another former Liverpool man, Danny Murphy, has regularly highlighted Jones' contribution on *Match of the Day*. After Curtis made his Premier League debut against Burnley last season, Murphy quipped, "He's going to save Liverpool some money in the market, that's for sure."

This season Murphy has been similarly effusive in his praise: "He's a superstar in the making. I don't like to get too carried away, but you have to with this lad. He's that good."

Jones is a laid-back yet confident character who takes both plaudits and criticism in his stride and while he knows this has been a breakthrough campaign for him, he feels he could have done even more.

"I've got a lot to give, off the ball and on the ball," he told LFC's official matchday programme. "In terms of me being me, I'm always someone who has spoken about getting goals and assists.

"This season has been good, but I've not scored as much as I'd have liked to have scored, or assisted as much as I'd have like to have assisted. The only way I can repay the opportunities I am given is to add more goals and assists to my game."



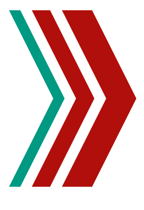

## TAA LA...

Trent Alexander-Arnold is a veritable elder statesman compared to Curtis Jones, two years and three months his senior with four times as many appearances in all competitions and a wise head on still-young shoulders. "When someone else local like Jamie Carragher and Steven Gerrard were playing, it always made it feel possible and achievable," he says.

"We've learned a lot and we will grow"

Setbacks seem to have come thick and fast this season but Andy Robertson insists this group of players has always – and will always – give 100 per cent

Words: William Hughes





**"One full of life and full of energy and also very tactically switched-on when it comes to football..." Andy Robertson is describing his manager Jürgen Klopp but might just as easily be talking about himself.**

The left-back's boundless reserves of energy help him mirror those qualities he identifies in his boss. Add in their shared enthusiasm for the game too and you can appreciate the idea of a manager moulding a team in his own image.

Let's think about those energy-levels. It seems incredulous now that when Robertson first joined Liverpool back in 2017, he found the intensity of the training so physically-demanding that his body struggled to cope.

It took him several months to adjust but he ended his first season at Anfield by playing in a Champions League final, his second by being crowned a champion of Europe and his third by taking home a Premier League winner's medal.

When asked once about fan favourites, he joked that "nobody wants the left-back's shirt!" But he has worked hard to change that perception.

Liverpool supporters would probably pin it down to a passage of play in the 4-3 win over Manchester City at Anfield in January 2018. The Scot, having been high up the pitch as a Reds attack broke down, pressed one City player after another, determined to win the ball back for his team as quickly as possible. The clip went viral on social media along with memes of the left-back supposedly chasing the City coach back down the M62.

Now, as the Reds come towards the end of this most testing of seasons, Robertson says he still feels strong. He admits he has been fortunate not to have picked up anything more than a few niggles along the way, and he ended April as the only Liverpool player selected by Klopp to start every Premier League fixture.

"Obviously I have played every game up to now and I hope to be fit and healthy and ready to go for the remaining games this season," he says. "I think with the help of the staff I've managed myself really well this season.

"Of course there have been struggles in terms of my body. It's been two seasons quite close together because of COVID-19 and so of course your body is sore, you're tired and everything, but it's just about trying to manage it as much as you can.

> Look, it's been a difficult season, we've struggled a wee bit, but it's a season where we've learnt a lot and hopefully we grow from it – that's the main thing

"It's about trying to be as ready for the games as best you can and I certainly try to do that whether that's at the training-ground or away from it. I really make a conscious effort of just making sure that I'm as best-prepared as possible and that's all you can do."

With the prospect of captaining his country at the delayed European Championships also on the horizon, it will be late summer before Andy is able to get a much-needed break, but he says it's important not to look too far ahead.

"Of course, as a country Scotland have also got a huge tournament coming up and that's something to look forward to. That's still too far in the distance to think about right now but when it comes to that, I hope I'll be ready.




"Then when the Euros are over hopefully I can get a nice break and have a nice time to switch off. I'm sure that will be all looked-after and then we'll be ready to go next season.

"A lot of teams are struggling with injuries and we've taken some bad injuries this season ourselves but I've enjoyed being one of the ones who has always been available and always been there. I've been one of the lucky ones. Hopefully that continues and my legs still feel as fresh as they are.

"Yes, it's maybe taking me a wee bit longer to recover from games just now, but it's all about just using the time you do have wisely and the medical and sports-science teams here at Liverpool are helping me massively with that, and as long as that continues until the end of the season then I believe I'll be fine."

The 27-year-old has never experienced a season like this in his Liverpool career to date. He acknowledges there were many factors behind the drop-off in performances between Christmas and mid-March with the long-term injuries, relentless nature of the fixture schedule and playing games without the fans all among them. However, his character is such that he always wants to look forwards rather than back.

"It's not been the same as the last couple of seasons we've been lucky enough to play in," he acknowledges. "We've obviously struggled a wee bit more this season in terms of results, consistency and performances. So yes, look, it's been a difficult season, but it's a season where we've learnt a lot and hopefully we grow from it. That's the main thing.

"We're heading into the last few games now but we've still got a lot to play for and we hope to climb the league table. We're not in a




position where we want to be right now and it's only us that can get us up the table. Hopefully when the season ends, we'll be able to look back on it and say it wasn't too bad after all."

Following 1-0 home defeats at the start of March at the hands of London duo Chelsea and Fulham, the Reds responded with wins over Wolverhampton Wanderers (away), Arsenal (away) and Aston Villa (home), then draws with Leeds United (away) and Newcastle United (home) heading into their May fixtures.

That sequence saw signs of the Reds returning to their best and showing some of the qualities synonymous with their preferred brand of football.

"Probably the best way to describe us if we're at our best is high-energy and intense," says Robertson. "When we put in really good games I think that's always the key to it: when we work hard, we all work for each other and then hopefully the quality shines at the other end.

"I'd say enthusiastic, too. On our really good games we go out like eleven boys on their local park probably just trying to have some fun and we always want to get that ball back as quickly as we can and then go up the other end and try to do what we do.

"This season we've been inconsistent to say the least but we've still had some really good games in there and it's just about building on that and seeing how hard we can work.

'You see the work-rate whether we're at our best or not and I hope the fans can see that the players still give it 100 per cent because it's certainly the case. Yes, some games don't always go for us and some do, but the work-rate is always there and we certainly always try our best with everything we do on the pitch."

One of the strangest statistics of Liverpool's campaign concerns their home form at the start of 2021. The Reds had, of course, been unbeaten in 68 Premier League games at Anfield before losing to Burnley in mid-January.

But their 2-1 win over Aston Villa on 10 April was their first home league victory of the year at the eighth attempt. It came courtesy of a brilliant injury-time winner from Trent Alexander-Arnold.

"That was a huge goal for us in terms of getting our first win at Anfield in 2021 which a lot of people probably couldn't have imagined at the start of the year.

"Our home form has not been good enough this year and so it was good to finally get the win and obviously when it's a last-minute winner, it's always that bit more special. It was up to us to use those

> The best way to describe us if we're at our best is high-energy and intense – when we work hard, we all work for each other and hopefully the quality shines

## WHAT FULL-BACKS WANT

***Andy Robertson is one of the best left-backs in world football at the moment – but what's the most important thing about playing in his position in the modern game?***

"I want to keep a clean-sheet, first and foremost," he says. "I want to let my winger have a quiet day as such. I want him to be worried about me – not the other way about – and I always try and defend as well as I can do because I know that's more than half the battle when it comes to playing full-back.

"You need to try and keep your winger quiet. If you're bombing forward and you create a chance but your winger also creates three or four opportunities, then you're not doing your job properly. So first and foremost it's that, but I also enjoy coming forward and running from deep and trying to create chances.

"I enjoy putting crosses in the box, trying to find my attackers and trying to help create goals – that's always been the case. I'm always a willing runner. I'll try and get up and down the pitch as best I can until the final whistle goes and that will always be the case.

"But for me, first and foremost I'm a defender, and if we don't get a clean-sheet then I'll never be happy walking off that park."

huge three points to our advantage and try and build momentum off it for the rest of our season to get to where we want to be."

Andy was also thrilled that the winning goal against Villa came from his fellow full-back. Between them, the pair have helped re-define the expectations of a modern full-back and the goal came soon after Alexander-Arnold had been omitted from Gareth Southgate's latest England squad.

"Trent is very focused, very driven, an exceptional player and a very good person as well. I don't like saying it, but there's not much wrong with him to be honest!

"He's a great lad and he's growing and becoming a bigger influence and a bigger noise in the dressing-room which always helps. And, as for his performances, when he plays at his best then nobody can really touch him, I don't think. His performances of late have been very good and hopefully that can continue.

"As a team and as individuals we have all struggled in parts of this season and Trent's been no different to that, but the last few performances have been very good and he'll be taking a lot of confidence from that and hopefully he and the team can have a big finish to the season."

Due to the high number of injuries to the Reds' centre-backs this season, being part of a regularly-reshuffled back-line has been something Robertson has had to get accustomed to.

However, the February arrival of Ozan Kabak, on loan from Schalke, has seen him the Turkish international form an increasingly solid partnership with Nat Phillips in the heart of the backline and also freed up Fabinho to operate to good effect in his preferred role as a deep-lying midfielder.

The Reds won each of the first four Premier League games they played with the rookie duo flanked by Robertson and Alexander-Arnold in the back-four.

"With Nat and Ozan, I think they're both doing incredibly well in tough circumstances," continues Robbo. "For Ozan, coming in halfway through a season is never easy, especially with having to adapt to a new league and things like that.

"People forget that Ozan is still young – only just 21 – and he's still got most of his career ahead of him. I think he's done really well, he's settled in quickly and he's been putting in some really good performances.

"As for Nat, he's been here a long time but has not really had much game-time. He's had a couple of loan-moves and things like that, but big Nat's been exceptional to be honest with you. He's obviously a wee bit older and he's certainly more vocal – you can hear him on the pitch, which is good – and he's growing into his role. So credit to him.

"Being ready to stand up and step in, they've both been really, really good and now we need a few more really good performances out of them again. Hopefully their good run together continues and we keep that going because for the last few games those clean-sheets are going to be key and us being strong in defence is going to be key for us to get the points we need.

"So credit to the two lads and long may it continue because you can see that they are building in confidence and their partnership is growing and, like I say, we'll definitely need that until the end of the season."

Last month's Champions League quarter-final exit to Real Madrid was a big blow to Robertson and his team-mates, especially as the








We need to win as many as we can from here to the end of the season and let's see where it takes us

Reds' second-leg display at Anfield had everything except goals.

Now he says the incentive for competing in the tournament for a fifth successive season can help drive Liverpool on in their bid to secure a top-four finish and earn qualification for the 2021/22 competition.

"The Real Madrid game at Anfield was tough to take. I thought it was probably one of the best performances of the season, to be honest. The way that we went about our business and the way that we put an unbelievable team under pressure was very good and if we'd just have had that clinical edge in front of goal, we might have been talking about something different.

"But over the two legs Real Madrid deserved to win and that's a fact. In the first half of the first leg we weren't good enough and at this level you get punished for that.

"They came over here and did a job and kept a clean-sheet, which was their aim to get through, and they made it through to the semi-finals.

"We have to take confidence from the performance we put in that night, though. If we play like that in the games that we have left this season then I believe that we'll pick up a lot of points – but it's up to us to do that now. It's up to us to give that same intensity, same determination, same everything that we put into that night into the remaining games because they are just as important, if not more.

"We all want to play Champions League football next season and the only way we can do that now is by finishing in that top four, so we're determined to try and make that happen and the only way we can do that is by winning games.

"We need to win as many as we can from here to the end of the season and let's see where it takes us. It's going to be a tough task but we believe that we can win football games and if we do that, it gives us our best possible chance."



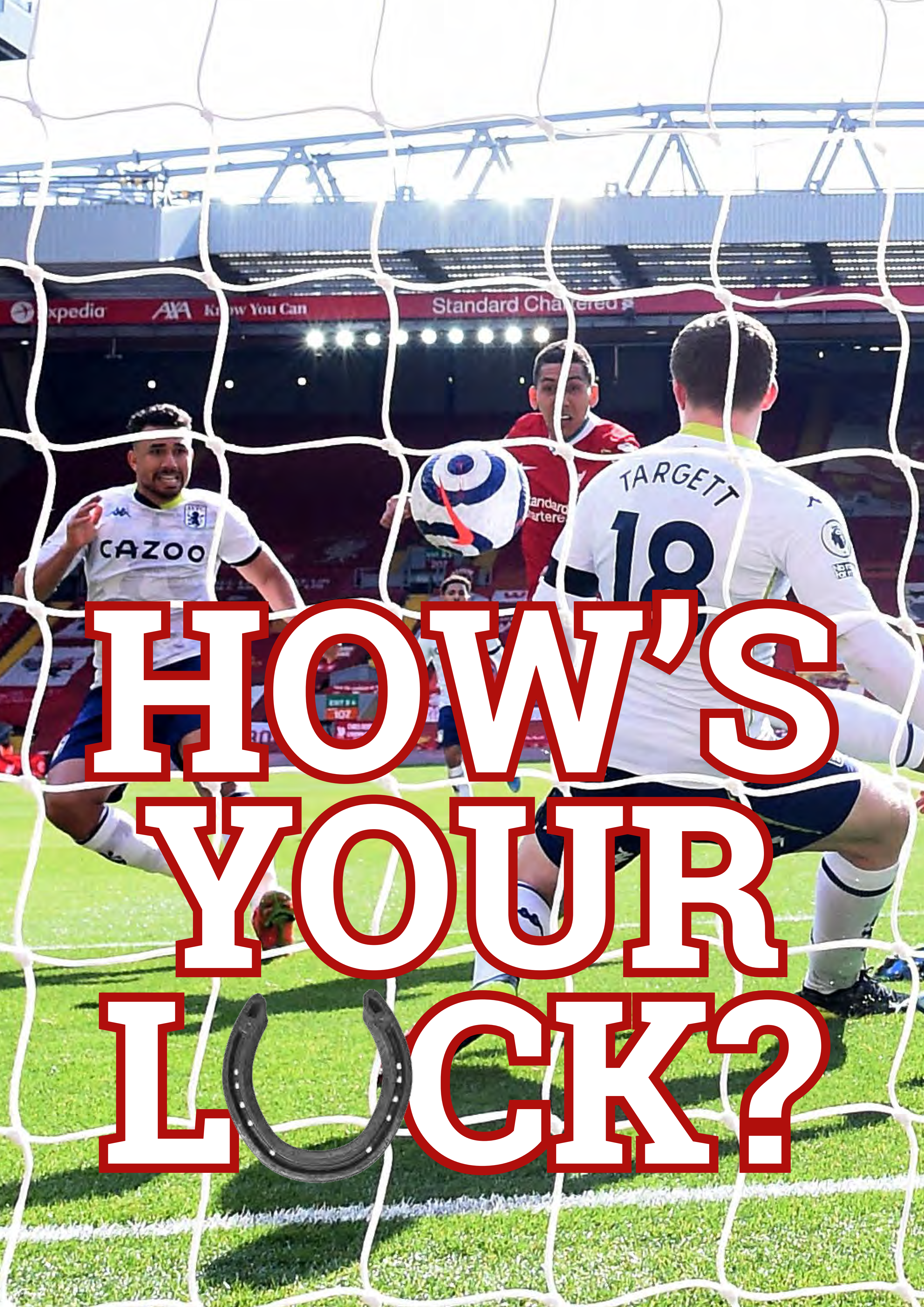
NOW IN PAPERBACK




# OUR YEAR **MY STORY**

From the pitch to the dressing room, the inside story of how we became champions – as seen through my eyes

Order online at **reachsportshop.com**




# HOW'S YOUR LUCK?



Thirteen questions about LFC and VAR this season… Unless it's overturned and we have to replace this quiz with something less controversial instead

1

2



3 And who supplied the assist for Mo Salah's stunning, two-touch goal against Sheffield United at Anfield, subsequently disallowed by VAR?



4 What happened ei minutes after substitu Jota had a goal again Ham ruled out for Sa foul on Angelo Ogbon



**5** And what transpired after Joe Gomez was judged to have handled the ball in the penalty area at Manchester City in November?

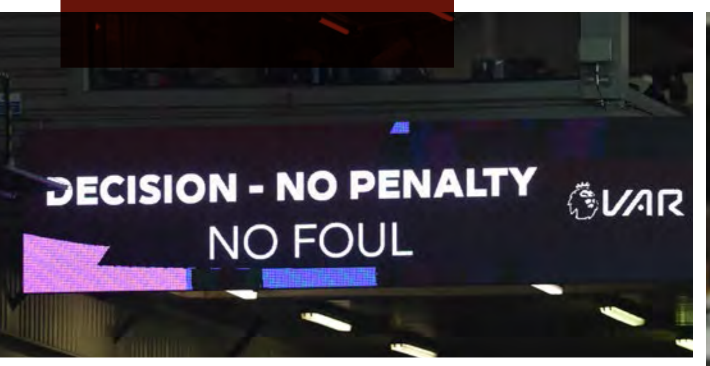



**6** Which two Reds players had goals disallowed for offside in the draw down at Brighton & Hove Albion?



**7** In that same game the Seagulls were awarded an equalising penalty in which minute for a foul on Danny Welbeck by Andy Robertson?

**8** Versus which visiting side did Liverpool benefit from VAR when a penalty call was overturned at Anfield in early December?





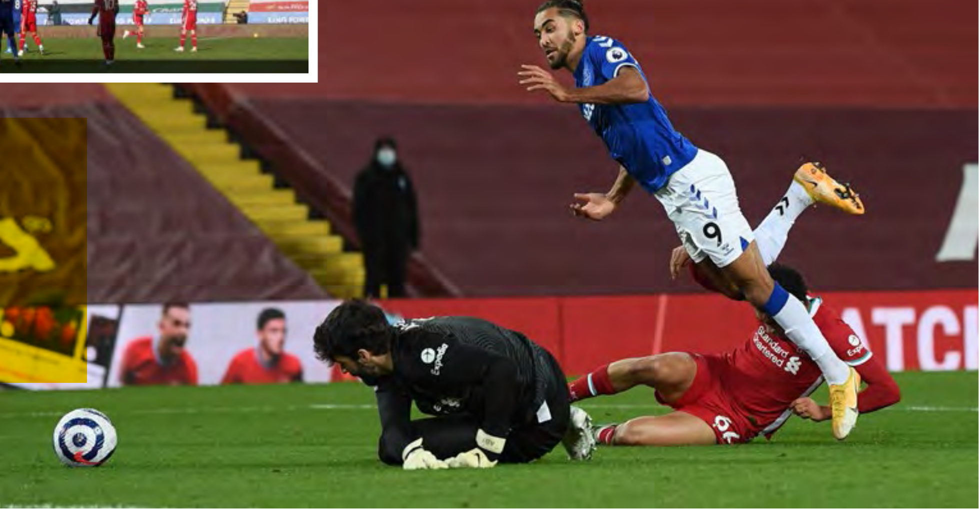


**9** In the away game at Fulham a penalty review was rejected by referee Andre Marriner following whose challenge on Ivan Cavaleiro?

Mo Salah saw a goal at Tottenham disallowed by VAR for handball by Roberto Firmino in the build-up, but which Spurs player also had a goal ruled out that night?




11



Which Sky Sports pundit said that "not one professional footballer" would have given the penalty awarded to Everton after Dominic Calvert-Lewin fell over Trent Alexander-Arnold in the Anfield Merseyside derby?



13

ANSWERS: 1. Andreas Christensen; 2. Jordan Henderson, for a Sadio Mane offside; 3. Trent Alexander-Arnold; 4. Jota then scored the winner from a Xherdan Shaqiri pass; 5. Kevin de Bruyne missed the subsequent spot-kick for City; 6. Mo Salah and Sadio Mane; 7. The 92nd minute; 8. Against Wolverhampton Wanderers when Sadio Mane was adjudged not to have fouled Conor Coady; 9. Fabinho's challenge; 10. Son Heung-min; 11. James Maddison; 12. Graeme Souness; 13. Offside against Diogo Jota in the build-up. GET THEM ALL RIGHT? YOU VAR HAVING A LAUGH...

SIDE BY SIDE

# VIRTUAL QUIZ

## Are you ready to put your **Liverpool FC** knowledge to the test?

Join us from home for a live night of quizzing, hosted by LFC TV's Peter McDowall, to raise money for vulnerable children in Liverpool and around the world.

To enter: www.liverpoolfc.com/sidebysidequiz

Date: Saturday 22 May 2021
Time: 8-9.15pm BST
Price: £15 per team






# "I JUST **THOUGHT** TO MYSELF, IT'S **TIME** WE SHOWED WHAT **LIVERPOOL** IS ALL ABOUT"

Alan Kennedy, goalscoring hero of Liverpool's 1981 European Cup triumph, relives that famous night 40 years ago in a chat with UEFA


EUROPEAN CUP FINAL
LFC
PARIS 1981



**It seems hard to believe that it's now four decades since Alan Kennedy sent the Real Madrid net rippling to land Liverpool another memorable European success.**

The Reds left-back was the unlikely hero when he raced onto a throw-in from his namesake Ray on the left-flank and crashed a shot past keeper Agustin. With only nine minutes remaining, it was enough to decide a tight contest at the Parc des Princes in Paris and send Liverpool supporters into jigs of joy akin to Alan's celebration.

He would later tell this magazine: "Even before my time, the finals of 1977 and 78 were just fantastic. I admired Liverpool in those two years when they won the European Cup and thought: I'd love to join that club. Then 12 months later I was playing for them, and a couple of years after that I was scoring the winner in a European Cup final in Paris."

Here's how he remembered that historic night in conversation with UEFA.com…

### ALAN, WHAT WAS IT LIKE PLAYING AS A FULL-BACK IN THE 1970S AND 80S, AND WHAT WERE THE REQUIREMENTS DEFENSIVELY AND OFFENSIVELY?

The requirements were different, certainly, at Newcastle United, my first club. When I came here to Liverpool, it was a lot different, a lot more open, [with] a lot more advancement going forward and it was a case of making sure that you looked after your team-mates as well. And that was a little bit different.

When I first started my career, as a young kid I didn't play full-back at that particular time. I played slightly more forward and in the end somebody suggested that I should play full-back and that's where I ended up playing.

### SO WHEN YOU SWITCHED TO FULL-BACK, DID YOU CARRY THOSE ATTACKING INSTINCTS WITH YOU? AND HOW DID THAT HELP YOU, HAVING THAT KNOWLEDGE OF A FORWARD-THINKING PLAYER?

Yeah, I was always a forward-thinking player. I was always in advance, sometimes of the ball, which isn't [always] the best case.

Full-backs of the 1950s and 60s were probably slightly more defensive and, let's say, they didn't venture over the halfway line. I certainly changed that in the 70s when I did play for Newcastle and, of course, for Liverpool.

I was encouraged to get forward. I was encouraged to support the players in front of me. And sometimes I'd get on the scoresheet.

### YOU SCORED IN THE 1981 EUROPEAN CUP FINAL FOR LIVERPOOL AGAINST REAL MADRID – DID YOU KNOW AT THE TIME THAT YOU'D BECOME THE FIRST FULL-BACK TO SCORE IN A EUROPEAN FINAL?

I never knew I'd be the first full-back to score a goal in a European Cup final. But my job – as Bob Paisley, the great manager that he was, described it – was: "You are there to support, you're there to start moves, you're there to be at the end of moves, and let other players – let the forwards – score the goals and take all the credit."

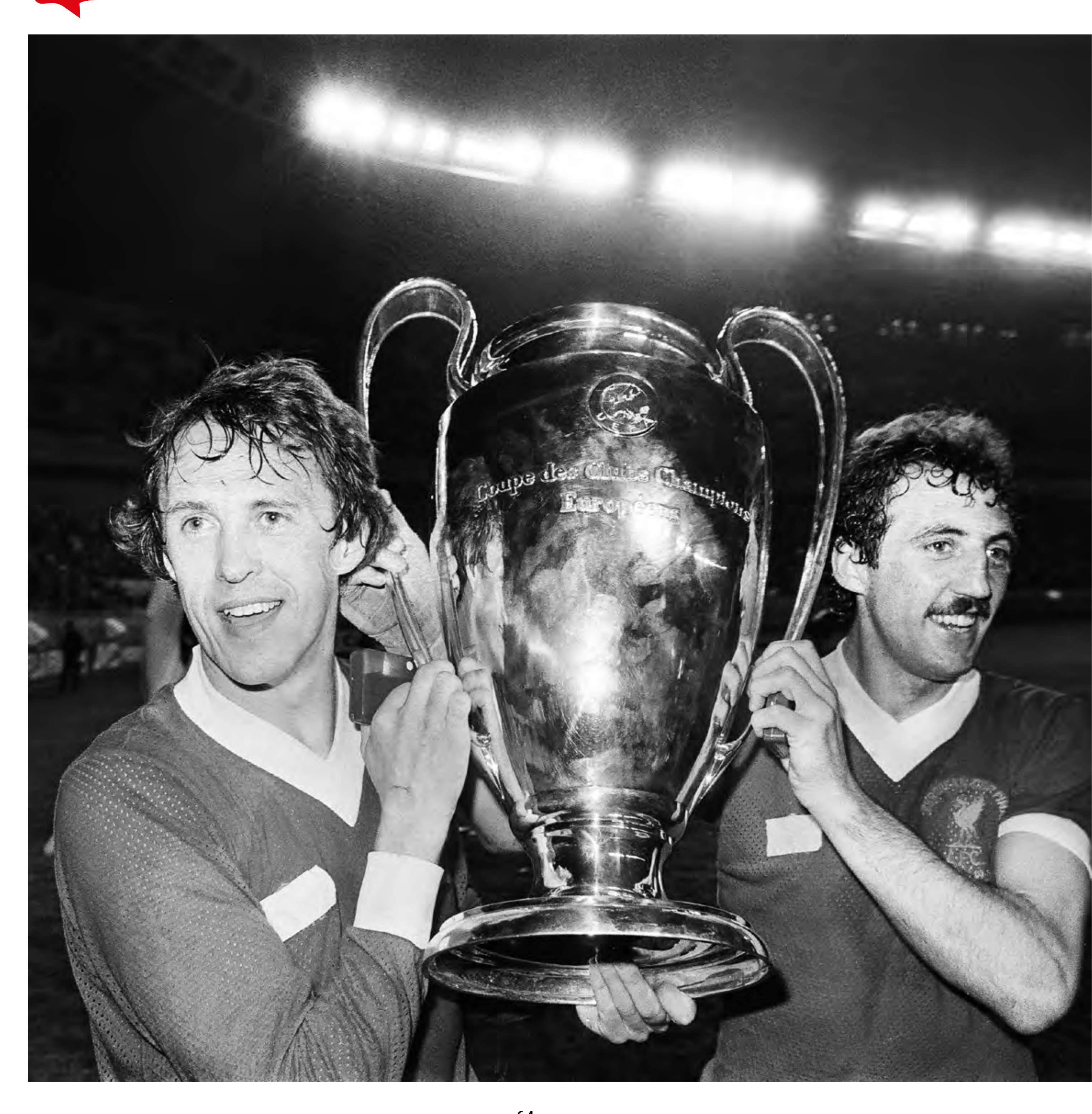
But I certainly changed that in 1981 against Real Madrid. The game itself wasn't a great game. It was on a poor pitch. We had one or two injury problems. I had a broken wrist [that] I was playing with and, in the end, we absolutely knew – and Bob Paisley will have known this from the start – that one goal was going to separate the two teams.

They did have a couple of chances. We had several chances,

I WAS ENCOURAGED TO GET FORWARD. I WAS ENCOURAGED TO SUPPORT THE PLAYERS IN FRONT OF ME. AND SOMETIMES I'D GET ON THE SCORESHEET



WE WERE PROBABLY ONE OF THE FIRST SETS OF FULL-BACKS TO DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT, TO GET FORWARD AND TO EITHER SCORE GOALS OR MAKE GOALS, AND THAT WAS OUR GAME



and I just thought to myself: it's time we showed what Liverpool is all about.

And I made the run forward not expecting the ball to be coming to me, and I chested the ball down and went forward. One of their players came down and tried to…I think he just tried to take me out of the game. And he missed me, and I found myself in a position.

I'd been in several positions like that before, and I'm not saying I was going to hit the target, but my mind was made up that, 'I'm going for a goal'.

I had several other options at that particular time, but I ended up going for a goal and the goalkeeper [Agustin], slightly misjudging where his position was, left the near-post open and the ball flew in the back of the net.

It was certainly a great moment. I didn't think, first of all, that it would be me scoring that goal. We had [Kenny] Dalglish, we also had David Johnson and the likes of Terry McDermott and Ray Kennedy, who were more qualified to score goals than I was.

But I think, in some ways, when I got in those positions, I just went for it. I didn't think about passing the ball. Whether I was a little bit greedy…!

**YOU WERE A BIT OF A TRAILBLAZER IN THAT SENSE. NOWADAYS, IT'S BECOME MORE NORMAL FOR FULL-BACKS TO MAKE A MORE VALUABLE IMPACT IN ATTACK, ESPECIALLY AT A CLUB LIKE LIVERPOOL?**

I think that's what Bob Paisley wanted and he certainly got it from the player on the other side of the pitch: Phil Neal, whose record in cup finals is the equal to mine in terms of scoring goals, and he was allowed to get forward down the right-hand side.

So that meant I had to come back and cover a little bit and hold my position, but when I went forward he had to hold his position, and I think we worked quite well from that side of it.

We were probably one of the first sets of full-backs to do something like that, to get forward and to either score goals or make goals, and that was our game. It wasn't just about the forwards, it wasn't just about the midfield to provide and score – it was about everybody contributing to the game.

We knew the likes of Alan Hansen and Phil Thompson were our defence, they were our defenders. So we were allowed the license to get forward when we could and support the midfield and on lots of occasions, if the forwards couldn't score, they allowed the full-backs to get all the glory at that particular time.

But, you know, it didn't matter who scored the goal. We all said that in the game when we played against Real Madrid: it doesn't matter who scores the goal as long as we win the game.

## ANDY ROBERTSON ON ALAN KENNEDY

Andy Robertson says Alan Kennedy helped blaze a trail for Liverpool left-backs. The 1981 European Cup final win over Real Madrid came 13 years before Robbo was born, but the Scot says: "Of course I've seen footage of the goal and I remember it was a good strike from him.

"On the highest of stages some people can snatch at it, especially when you're not used to being in that position. You can maybe blast it over or blast it wide, but he showed his composure and put it in the back of the net.

"When Liverpool win the Champions League, it's a huge deal. We've been lucky to do it, and so was he, and to score a winner in the final – I can't imagine what that would have felt like for him.

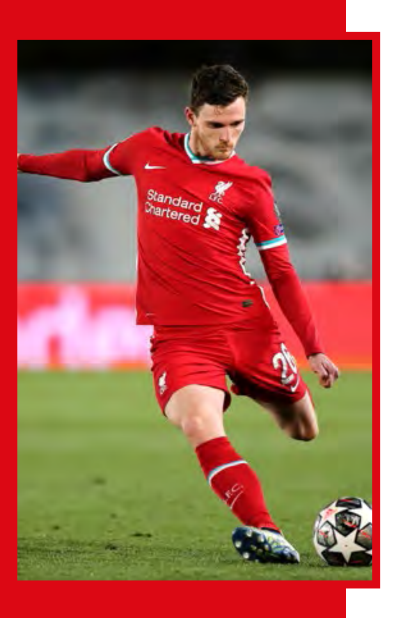
"I'm sure people would've thought the strikers would steal the limelight, but it was a left-back. It was an amazing night for him and an amazing night for Liverpool, and that's why he's a legend at this club.

"Full-backs of old were a wee bit different but it just shows you that back then, they still went forward and still tried to create chances and clearly he did that his whole Liverpool career. He tried to create for other people and obviously tried to score now and again too – and there's nowhere better than on the biggest stage of world football.

"The full-back position has been constantly evolving into an attractive role now, with the fact that we really go forward. But at the end of the day, whether it's the 1980s or here and now, our first job is to defend properly and keep our wingers quiet. That's what we get most satisfaction out of, and that will never change for a full-back."







BOB PAISLEY, HE SET HIS STALL OUT, "THIS IS GOING TO BE A ONE-NIL – WHOEVER SCORES THE FIRST GOAL IS GOING TO WIN THE GAME." AND THAT'S WHAT HE FELT



WHICH YOU DID, AND THAT WAS THE FIRST FINAL THAT REAL MADRID HAD LOST, HAVING WON SIX PREVIOUS EUROPEAN CUPS AT THE TIME…

Yeah, it's quite amazing really for me because of the two teams, I'm not quite sure who were the favourites. Real Madrid had the experience in the competition and they had great managers and great players and whatever, but Liverpool were coming to the fore and British teams were doing so well in European football.

In 1977, Liverpool won it. In 78 they won it. In 79 it was Nottingham Forest. In 80 it was Forest again. And Liverpool were there in 81. So the dominant side of it was the English or British football because we had one or two teams from Scotland who were doing pretty well too.

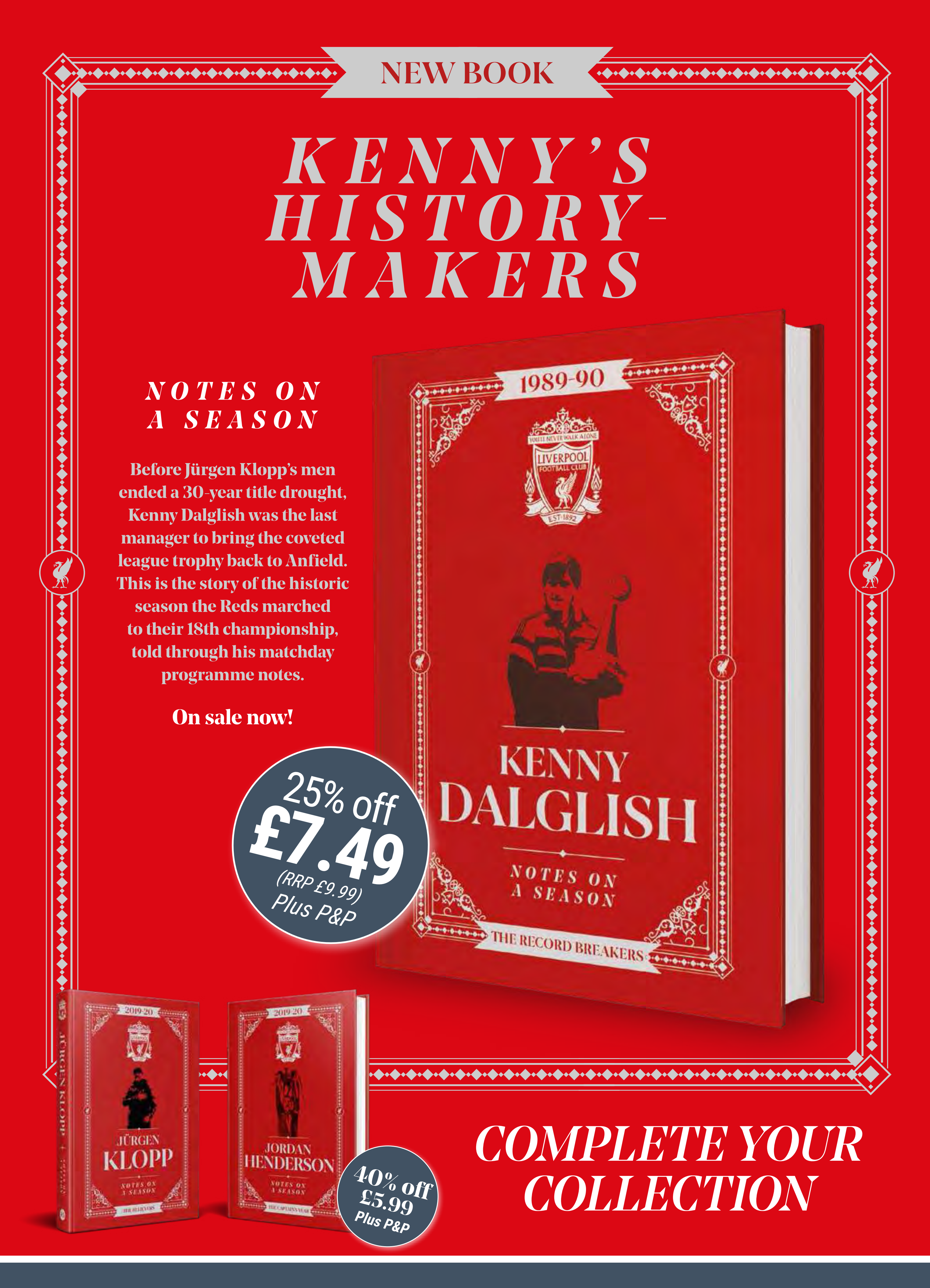
But Liverpool's experience showed on that day. Real Madrid were possibly the favourites. I won't say that they were a great, great team, but you still had to respect them. They were still Real Madrid.

But on the night it just wasn't great football on a poor pitch and in the end it was decided by one goal. I think we knew that and that's where managers came to the fore. Bob Paisley, he set his stall out, "This is going to be a one-nil – whoever scores the first goal is going to win the game." And that's what he felt.

So the longer the game went on, he was he was okay about it, he was fine about it. He knew Liverpool that would grow and grow and grow and eventually break down the Real Madrid defence.

Whether it was me, whether it was Phil Neal, whether it was any other player, it didn't matter who did it. But we broke down the defence, we got past them and we scored the goal, and eventually, we won the cup.




NEW BOOK
KENNY'S HISTORY-MAKERS
NOTES ON A SEASON
Before Jürgen Klopp's men ended a 30-year title drought, Kenny Dalglish was the last manager to bring the coveted league trophy back to Anfield. This is the story of the historic season the Reds marched to their 18th championship, told through his matchday programme notes.
On sale now!
25% off
£7.49
(RRP £9.99)
Plus P&P
1989-90
LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB
KENNY DALGLISH
NOTES ON A SEASON
THE RECORD BREAKERS
JÜRGEN KLOPP
JORDAN HENDERSON
40% off
£5.99
Plus P&P
COMPLETE YOUR COLLECTION
Order online at reachsportshop.com

# MAKE OURS A TREBLE

Celebrating the 20th anniversary of Liverpool's triple-cup triumph under Gerard Houllier with a gallery of evocative images








Michael Owen, left, scored 24 goals in all competitions in 2000/01, including hat-tricks against Aston Villa and Newcastle United. Emile Heskey, below being mobbed by jubilant team-mates Danny Murphy and Robbie Fowler, hit 22 goals including a fine hat-trick at Derby County







Emile and centre-back Sami Hyypia




The Reds knocked out Olympiacos in the third round of the UEFA Cup, wearing their striking away kit in the first leg in Athens



Midfielder Vladimir Smicer tussles for possession in the Olympiacos home leg




Robbie Fowler scored three in a thumping 8-0 win at Stoke City in a League Cup fourth-round tie




Steven Gerrard made his presence felt at home to Arsenal – he also scored the first in a 4-0 win




Danny Murphy's fab free-kick won it for Liverpool at Old Trafford



January signing Jari Litmanen came on as a substitute in the League Cup semi-final first leg at Crystal Palace



Igor Biscan was among the scorers in the 5-0 second-leg victory over Palace




Nick Barmby was on target in a 2-0 win at Leeds United in the fourth round of the FA Cup







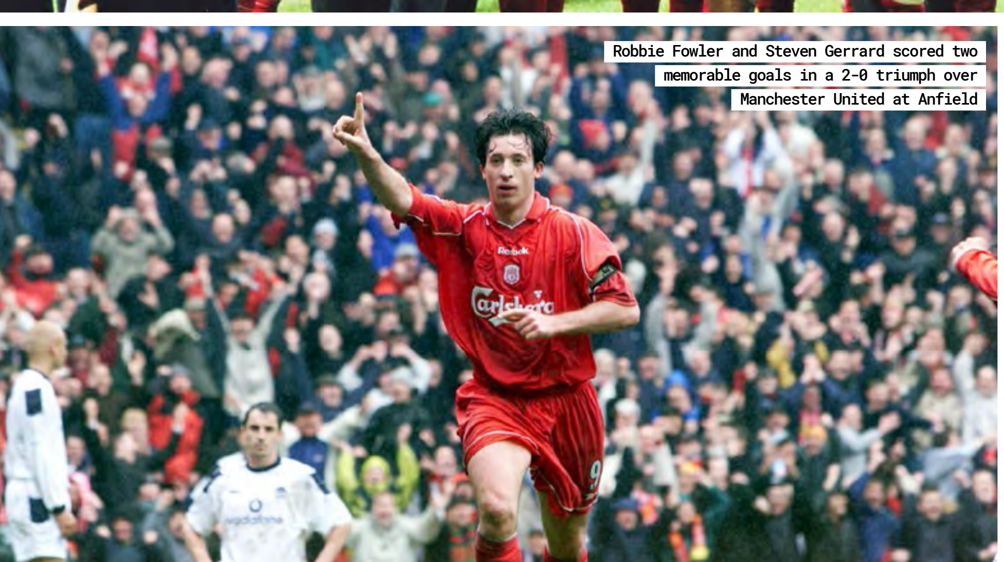




Defeating old foes Roma in the UEFA Cup fourth round

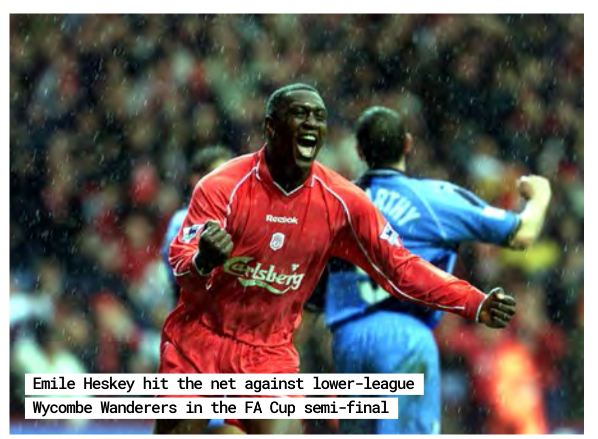
Goalkeeper Sander Westerveld was the spot-kick-saving hero in the League Cup final against Birmingham City

The first of two trophies which would be won in Cardiff that season



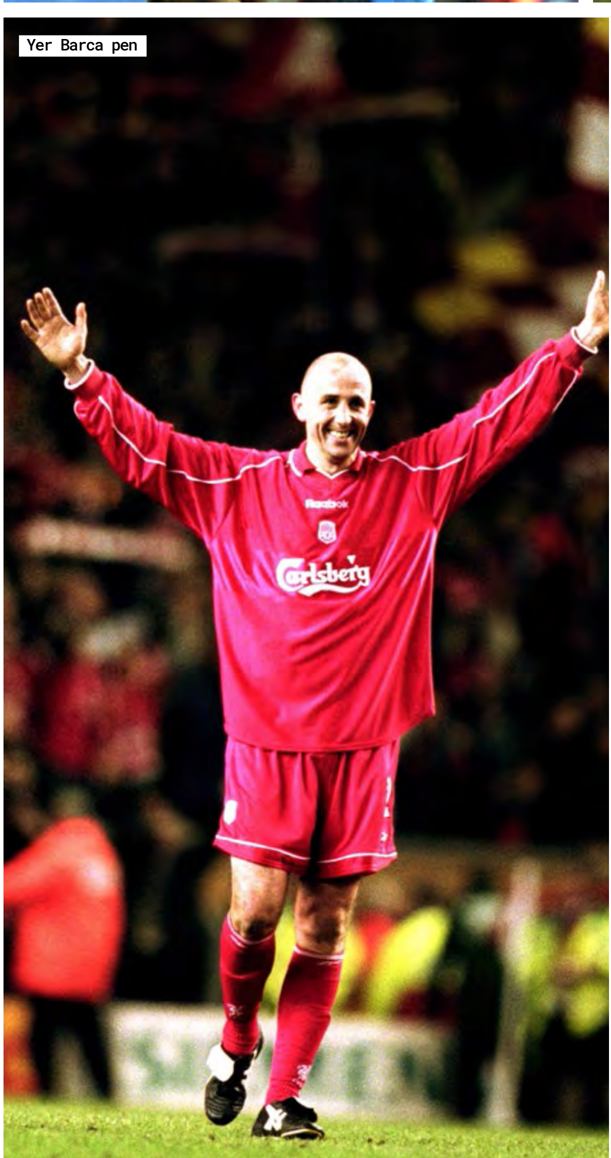


Robbie Fowler and Steven Gerrard scored two memorable goals in a 2-0 triumph over Manchester United at Anfield


Emile Heskey hit the net against lower-league Wycombe Wanderers in the FA Cup semi-final



Gary McAllister's sensational free-kick settled the Goodison Park derby



Yer Barca pen


Owen Owen Owen… The ace marksman was firing on all cylinders, scoring here at home to Newcastle and below against Chelsea






Michael's epic equaliser against Arsenal in the FA Cup final


What a way to win the Cup













The UEFA Cup final against Alaves was a nine-goal thriller in Dortmund…










…settled by an extra-time, own-goal, 'Golden Goal'

The dramatic win over Alaves secured a third cup of the 2000/01 season for Gerard Houllier's renaissance Reds

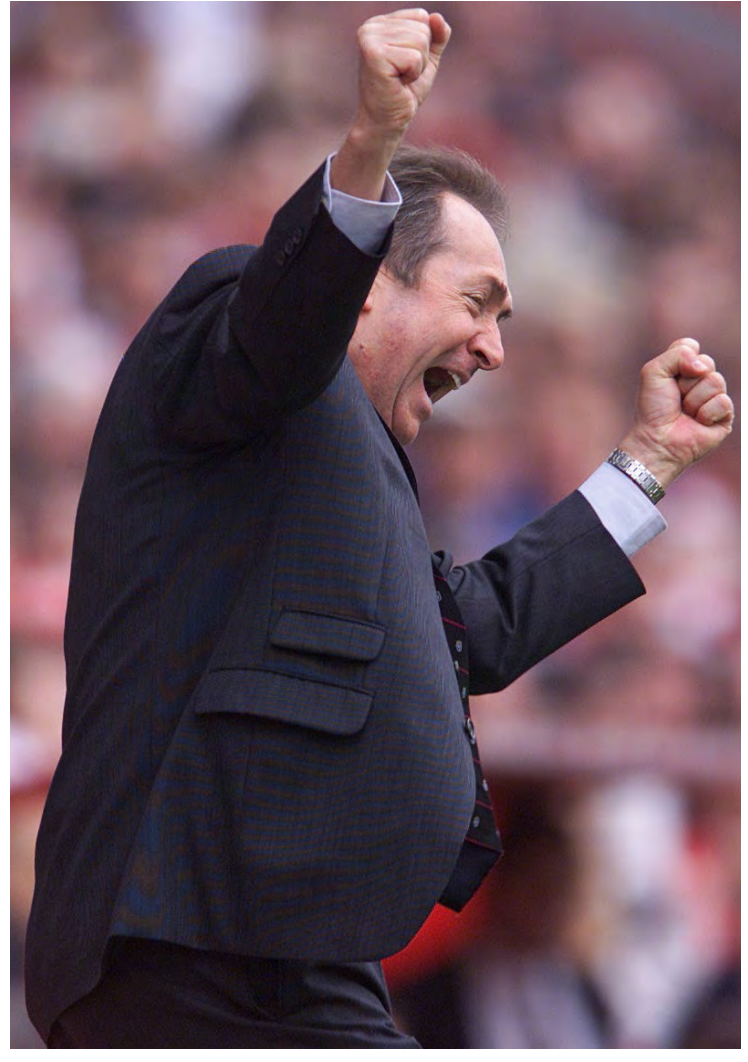








"Three cups and the Champions League!" chanted the travelling Kopites as Liverpool concluded the season with a 4-0 win at Charlton to ensure a place in the following season's prestige tournament





Another glorious homecoming parade through the red-and-white streets of Liverpool




Carlsberg
OFFICIAL
LIVERPOOL FC
BEER PARTNER
Carlsberg
YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE
LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB
EST·1892
Official Beer Partner

# WIN

# ROBBIE FOWLER'S BOOK

**Anfield's favourite son, 25 years after first signing as a professional for Liverpool, on goals, glory and the lessons he's learnt…**

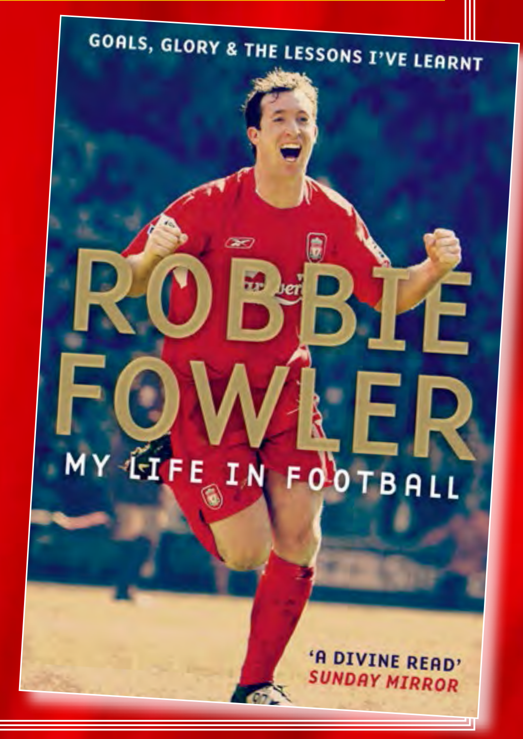
To Liverpool fans, Robbie Fowler was 'God'. He's the eighth-highest goalscorer in the history of the Premier League with the vast majority of those 163 for the Reds.

But before all that, he was a Liverpool lad who simply loved the game, and *My Life In Football* is his engaging, personal and revealing story.

Robbie opens up about his astounding achievements, the price of fame and the regrets and struggles of being a professional footballer. From Hillsborough to Madrid, via the cup treble, that goal-line celebration, hundreds of goals, Gerard Houllier, Rafael Benitez, Jürgen Klopp and more, he explains his thinking about the modern game.

Inviting readers inside the dressing-room, he shares stories of legendary team-mates like Ian Rush, Michael Owen and Steven Gerrard, as well as his own rise to football's top table.

*My Life In Football* by Robbie Fowler is now available as a paperback from Blink Publishing, priced £8.99.




**Better still, we have five copies to give away for free. To be in with a chance of winning one, simply tell us:**

**In which of the following 2000/01 finals did Robbie NOT score for Liverpool: (a) League Cup (b) FA Cup (c) UEFA Cup**

Email your answer, name, address and contact phone-number with 'ROBBIE FOWLER BOOK COMPETITION' in the subject line to liverpoolfcmag@reachsport.com before 7 June 2021. Normal Reach PLC competition rules apply. The winners must reside within the UK. They will be notified and receive their prize in due course.



# UP FOR THE CUP

## Liverpool FC's talented Under-18s have reached the semi-finals of this season's FA Youth Cup and here's how they reached the final four of the prestigious tournament

**Marc Bridge-Wilkinson's squad of talented LFC teens will travel to Suffolk to take on Ipswich Town in the FA Youth Cup semi-finals later this month with the prize up for grabs a place in the final against Aston Villa or West Bromwich Albion.**

That game is currently scheduled for on or around Saturday 29 May and will be a one-off tie in the same way as it was when the Reds won the trophy at Manchester City under Barry Lewtas two years ago.

This time around the young Reds kicked off their campaign with a comfortable win over the academy side of National League club Sutton United, before producing impressive results on the road at Manchester United and Leicester City respectively in rounds four and five.

They then reached the quarter-finals with a ruthless display of finishing against Arsenal, in a game which saw the team fulfil their dreams of being part of a winning Liverpool team at Anfield.

The free-scoring Reds have produced 15 goals in their four fixtures thus far, while conceding just twice and not once from open play. Attacker Ethan Ennis and midfielder James Balagizi have both scored hat-tricks in the run to the final four.

"This team is unbelievable to play in," captain and centre-back Jarell Quansah told the club website. "We don't concede that many goals and we've scored the most in the [Under-18s Premier League North] league."

The Warrington-born skipper adds that he's enjoyed playing alongside Billy Koumetio in the heart of defence: "I love big Billy, he is a really good defender and he is really good on the ball and he is great to play alongside.




"I've also played alongside [goalkeeper] Harvey [Davies] since a young age, so seeing him get his opportunity and how well he is doing, it's so good to see.

"You can score as many goals as you want but if you don't keep them out at the other end you are not going to win many games, so we just try to keep it as tight as we can.

"Manchester United threw the kitchen sink at us but we got through that and it was quality from all the boys. It was the same towards the end against Arsenal.

"It was tough against Manchester United, trying to hold out for the 1-0 with ten men, but the boys showed our togetherness and we beat Leicester City, who are a good side, in the next round convincingly."

He says playing at Anfield in the last-eight win against Arsenal was an incredible experience, albeit behind-closed-doors.

"It's one of the biggest moments of mine and the other lads' careers so far. Just to get the chance to play there and have that experience was unbelievable.

"Playing under the Anfield floodlights against Arsenal is what dreams are made of and it gave me a great feeling."

Now the Reds face an Ipswich Town side who have seen off Fulham, Swindon Town, Middlesbrough and Sheffield United so far.

"Day to day, it's really exciting working with these boys," says Bridge-Wilkinson. "We work really hard and we don't shy away from that. We work them hard and physically it's tough and mentally as well.

"We are really pleased with the way things have gone so far and hopefully that can carry on."

Liverpool are looking to win the trophy for a fifth time having previously triumphed in 1996, 2006, 2007 and 2019.

## THIRD ROUND: ENNIS THE MENACE

**Liverpool 6** (Morton, Musialowski 2, Ennis 3)
**Sutton United 0**
Tuesday 16 March 2021
**LFC**: Mrozek; Mabaya, Quansah, Jonas (Ennis 64), Norris; Balagizi (McConnell 80), Corness, Stephenson; Musialowski, Woltman (Pilling 84), Morton.

**The Reds began their campaign with a comfortable victory against their visitors from Surrey with a 22-minute hat-trick from substitute Ethan Ennis stealing the show.**

The attacker's treble rounded things off after midfielders Tyler Morton and Mateusz Musialowski had put Liverpool in command at Kirkby.

Morton broke the deadlock when he swivelled to produce a fine shot on the turn from distance that found its way into the bottom corner.

Sutton defended doggedly though and, aided by some good goalkeeping from Johnny Thurbin, restricted Liverpool's lead to that single goal at the break. However, Musialowski then added a quickfire double soon after the restart to all but ensure the Reds' progress.

Morton was provider for his first before the Pole smashed home his second after an initial effort had been blocked.

An unfortunate injury to defender Lee Jonas saw Ennis enter the fray and the striker made quite an impact. He rose high to nod in full-back James Norris's excellent cross and was then in the right place to prod home a cross from defender Isaac Mabaya.

And he completed his treble with a fine solo effort, driving towards the Sutton defence before producing a calm low finish with four minutes remaining.

>>





## FOURTH ROUND: TYLER'S THE HEAD BOY

**Manchester United 0**
**Liverpool 1** (Morton)
Saturday 3 April 2021
**LFC:** Davies; Bradley, Quansah, Koumetio, Norris; Balagizi, Corness (Jonas 90), Stephenson; Musialowski (Wilson 84), Woltman (Chambers 72), Morton.

**The young Reds showed plenty of character as they overcame Manchester United at Leigh Sports Village despite having to play the final quarter of the game with ten men.**

Tyler Morton's 16th-minute header, glanced over United goalkeeper Radek Vitek from a James Norris cross, separated the sides during an entertaining first half and it ultimately proved enough for victory too.

The home side piled on the pressure and Liverpool's task was made all the more difficult midway through the second period when Norris saw red for a sliding challenge on defender Marc Jurado as he tried to win the ball on the halfway line.

But Liverpool survived a late onslaught from the hosts to take their place in the last 16.

Bridge-Wilkinson said afterwards: "It was a difficult day for us and I don't think we really performed with the ball in possession like we normally do, but you've got to give credit to the lads because we stuck at it.

"Manchester United had a lot of the ball, but when you are in situations like that you can only play the game that's in front of you and the lads coped really well defending, towards the end of the game especially."

## FIFTH ROUND: BALAGIZI IS TREBLE TOPS

**Leicester City 1** (Ewing pen)
**Liverpool 5** (Balagizi 3, Woltman 2)
Friday 16 April 2021
**LFC:** Davies; Bradley, Quansah, Koumetio, Norris; Balagizi, Corness, Stephenson; Musialowski (Frauendorf 78), Woltman, Morton.

**James Balagizi hit a hat-trick to help the team into the last eight as the Reds recorded an impressive win against the Foxes.**

The Reds flew out of the blocks and went ahead when 17-year-old midfielder Balagizi received a pass from Dominic Corness and drove towards the box before producing a clinical finish into the bottom corner.

Liverpool keeper Harvey Davies produced important saves from striker Kian Pennant – nephew of ex-Reds winger Jermaine – and midfielder Ethan Fitzhugh to preserve Liverpool's lead, before Bridge-Wilkinson's men took control of the tie in the final quarter with Woltman scoring twice inside three minutes.

Mateusz Musialowski provided the assist for his first and the striker then latched onto a long ball from captain Jarell Quansah to fire in Liverpool's third.

Leicester pulled one back from the spot through skipper Oliver Ewing after Quansah was judged to have handled inside the area, but Balagizi wrapped up the win with two late strikes to complete his treble.

"I'm so happy to have helped the team which is the most important thing," Balagizi said afterwards. "Leicester are a good side and we had to work hard to get the win – and thankfully with the spirit and the togetherness of the team we were able to do that."



## SIXTH ROUND: OPERATION ANFIELD

**Liverpool 3** (Woltman, Norris pen, Musialowski)
**Arsenal 1** (Azeez pen)
Friday 30 April 2021.
**LFC:** Davies; Bradley, Quansah, Koumetio, Norris; Balagizi, Corness (Mabaya 85), Stephenson; Musialowski (Frauendorf 77), Woltman, Morton.

**The Reds moved into the semis with an impressive victory at Anfield. First-half goals from Max Woltman and James Norris established a lead that was later increased by Mateusz Musialowski's cool finish at the Kop-end after the break.**

Watched by first-team manager Jürgen Klopp, the hosts went ahead when right-back Conor Bradley's deep cross picked out James Balagizi, whose cushioned header found the run of Woltman and he finished clinically with his left foot.

Reds keeper Harvey Davies made a fine save from Gunners midfielder Miguel Azeez just before Liverpool doubled their lead when Dominic Corness' effort was pushed away by Arsenal keeper Ovie Ejeheri only for Tyler Morton to be fouled in the ensuing scramble. Norris converted from the penalty spot.

Arsenal made a bright start to the second period but Liverpool extended their lead with another piece of ruthless finishing. Balagizi carried the ball forward from his own half before slipping in Musialowski, who cut inside to shoot across Ejeheri.

The Gunners forced their way back into the tie when midfielder Khayon Edwards was fouled in the box by Billy Koumetio, and Miguel Azeez smashed home the spot-kick.

However despite prolonged Arsenal pressure, Liverpool's back line – well-marshalled by captain Jarell Quansah and Koumetio – saw the game out.

Words: William Hughes




# LFC'S YOUTH CUP CLASS

**1996 - West Ham 0 Liverpool 2 (Jon Newby, David Larmour); Liverpool 2 (Michael Owen, Stuart Quinn) West Ham 1 (Frank Lampard)**
**Liverpool won 4-1 on aggregate**

**2006 - Liverpool 3 (Robbie Threlfall, Ryan Flynn, Miki Roque) Manchester City 0; Manchester City 2 (Daniel Sturridge 2) Liverpool 0**
**Liverpool won 3-2 on aggregate**

**2007 - Liverpool 1 (Craig Lindfield) Manchester United 2 (Robbie Threlfall og, Sam Hewson pen); Manchester United 0 Liverpool 1 (Robbie Threlfall)**
**Liverpool won 4-3 pens after tie ended 2-2 on aggregate**

**2019 - Manchester City 1 (Nabil Touaizi) Liverpool 1 (Bobby Duncan) after extra-time**
**Liverpool won 5-3 on penalties**



# HOPE IN OUR HEARTS

Recharge, reflect and come back fresh – that's the message at the end of a season of highs and lows for Liverpool FC Women in the Championship, as they look to build upon a strong base

Words: William Hughes




## SEASON OVERVIEW

Ultimately it was a tough season for the Reds as they missed out on their goal of returning to the top-flight at the first attempt.

Following the disappointment of being relegated via points-per-game after the COVID-19 pandemic curtailed the 2019/20 season, Liverpool dropped late points in their opening game in the second tier at home to Durham and took time to adapt to a more physical league and several away fixtures on plastic pitches.

A change of approach in the second half of the campaign saw the Reds implement a more possession-based game under interim-manager Amber Whiteley and they lost just one league game under her management, finishing the season on an unbeaten run of eight games in the FA Women's Championship.

## BEST PERFORMANCE

Liverpool became the first team of the season to defeat Casey Stoney's high-flying Manchester United when the sides met in a Continental Cup tie at Prenton Park in October.

The Reds nullified United's game-plan and ran out 3-1 winners against their Super League opponents thanks to two goals from midfielder Rachel Furness and another by attacker Rinsola Babajide.

In the league, two impressive home displays saw them produce free-scoring victories against Crystal Palace and Coventry United. The 4-0 defeat of Palace in early December was a memorable day as it was the only game of the season played in front of supporters.

Thanks to the hard work of club officials, a small number of fans with a local postcode were able to attend and they witnessed



a polished performance with Babajide scoring twice and forward Amalie Thestrup and midfielder Amy Rodgers also on the scoresheet.

"I don't know if the fans could sense it in the stands but their presence made a huge difference to us on the pitch," said Welsh international Rhiannon Roberts afterwards.

Fast-forward to March and the Reds went one better as they put five past Coventry United in a first-rate performance. Having by now adapted to the new approach encouraged by Amber Whiteley, the side made a fast start and their visitors had no answer.

Captain Niamh Fahey scored twice while Becky Jane, by now being deployed further forward on the right, fellow winger Melissa Lawley and January signing Ceri Holland also found the back of the Coventry net.

## UPS AND DOWNS

From being pegged back at home to Durham on the opening day, too many draws cost Liverpool dearly in their promotion bid. Being held at Lewes and Blackburn Rovers in November saw the Reds lose ground, especially after they'd been edged out 2-1 at much-fancied Leicester City the previous month.

This meant the return game at Durham the weekend before Christmas took on plenty of significance but Liverpool could not get going at Maiden Castle and slipped to a 2-0 defeat.

Having dropped a dozen points from their first 11 games, there was a change at the top with Amber Whiteley replacing manager Vicky Jepson on an interim basis. Her first game at the helm was against league leaders Leicester and was a 'must-win' in terms of the title race.

Despite taking an early lead, the Reds were reduced to ten players early in the second half and the Foxes came from behind to claim a 2-1 victory and put one hand on the trophy.

In their next outing Liverpool dropped two more points in the snow at Charlton Athletic, albeit as a result of a controversial late penalty that earned the hosts a 2-2 draw. However, their form in the run-in was good as they remained unbeaten in their final eight fixtures, collecting 18 points from the final 24 available.




## CASE FOR THE DEFENCE

The Reds backline was the joint-best in the division after shipping only 15 goals across their 20 league games – a record shared with Durham and Sheffield United.

They kept clean-sheets in more than half of their league games (11) and performed well, especially considering they were missing last season's captain, experienced centre-back Sophie Bradley-Auckland, for the entirety of the campaign due to the pandemic.

## MILESTONE MATCHES

The season started with long-serving winger Ashley Hodson making her 100th appearance in a Liverpool shirt, becoming only the second player to do so in the professional era of the women's game.

Another handful of players went on to bring up their half-century of games for the club: defender Leighanne Robe, captain Niamh Fahey, attackers Rinsola Babajide and Kirsty Linnett and midfielder Amy Rodgers.




## YOUNGEST DEBUTANT

Teenage defender Lucy Parry (above) became the youngest-ever player in Liverpool FC Women's history when she came on as a substitute after half-an-hour of the 2-1 FA Women's Championship win at Coventry United on 4 October.

At just 16 years and 150 days, she broke the age-record set by fellow left-back Maz Pacheco, who was 16 years and 212 days when she made her debut. Lucy is an Academy graduate who came through the Reds' Regional Talent Club.

## PLAYERS OF THE MONTH

The Reds claimed three of the league's monthly awards for player of the month. Midfielder Rachel Furness (left) was the first, for September, the Northern Ireland international enjoying a superb start to the season with four goals in three league games.

In February, new recruit Ceri Holland was rewarded for her immediate impact in a red shirt. The 23-year-old had joined the Reds after four years in the US at the University of Kansas.

Making her debut off the bench, she arrived late into the box to score a sliding goal against Charlton Athletic. Her first start came in the home game against London Bees and once again she found the net, scoring the second in a 3-0 victory. Her fine form for interim-manager Amber Whiteley also saw her called up into a training camp for the Wales senior squad for the first time.

Then in March it was the turn of skipper Niamh Fahey to be honoured. The Republic of Ireland centre-back was recognised for her influence at both ends of the pitch during a month which saw the






## MANAGER OF THE MONTH

Interim-manager Amber Whiteley (left) was also recognised by the league as she collected the FA Women's Championship manager-of-the-month trophy for March.

The decision of the League Managers' Association panel followed a month in which Whiteley's team remained unbeaten, earning seven points from a possible nine against Crystal Palace, Coventry United and Blackburn Rovers.

She saw it as recognition for everyone's hard work: "This one is for all of us – every staff member and every player. It's a reflection of the effort that has been put in both on and away from the pitch in recent months."

Chair of the LMA panel Marieanne Spacey-Cale said: "Since Amber took on the reins, Liverpool have regained their form and are competing with Sheffield United to finish third in the league.

"The club is building momentum going into next season, when Liverpool will be aiming to mount a strong promotion challenge, and Amber is playing an important role in laying the foundations for this."

## EVER-PRESENT

Summer signing Taylor Hinds (below) was the only player to appear in all 24 of Liverpool's fixtures in 2020/21. The 22-year-old was a constant presence at left-back and made an instant impression in the Reds defence.

Reds secure two wins and a draw in their three matches.

Fahey's header brought her side a winner at Crystal Palace and she then scored twice in the 5-0 home win over Coventry United before the Reds ended the month with a 1-1 draw at home to Blackburn Rovers.

The club's in-house player-of-the-month award saw three players recognised on a couple of occasions. With the April winner to be confirmed at the time of going to press, midfielder Rachel Furness (September and October), attacker Rinsola Babajide (November and December) and midfielder Missy Bo Kearns (January/February and March) all retained their hold on the honour for successive months.






## TOP SCORER

Vice-captain Rachel Furness led the way with seven goals in all competitions, including a joint-best of five in the FA Women's Championship – a total matched by Rinsola Babajide.

Young midfielder Missy Bo Kearns and winger Ashley Hodson topped the assists charts with four each across all competitions.

## BEST GOAL

Rinsola Babajide's brilliant individual goal settled the home game against Sheffield United in November – and what a stunning solo strike it was.

Receiving the ball from a Taylor Hinds throw-in on the left, she jinked her way past five challenges before beating former Liverpool keeper Fran Kitching with a shot which was too hot to handle.

## AMBER'S ASSESSMENT

"We had a solid end to the season and were unbeaten in eight. I think at one point we were 10 points off second, so to narrow that right down to three points was a good end to the season.

"I've loved every minute of this interim role and that's down to the people that I get to work with every day. The staff and the players are all really good people and have made this job a dream.

"I thought the young players who have been on the pitch have done us proud in these past few months. It doesn't matter how old you are – if you are ready and you're capable then no problem, get on the pitch and show what you can do and they have all done that when given the opportunity.

"Hopefully we've now got good building-blocks in place for next season and that's 100 per cent what it's been about in this second half of the season, laying the foundations for next year. The players need to go away now and recharge, reflect and come back fresh for pre-season and I'm sure they'll be ready."



## 2020/21 FA WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

(home games in CAPS)

**September**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 6 DURHAM | 1-1 | Furness |
| 13 London Bees | 3-0 | Furness, Babajide, Lawley |
| 27 CHARLTON | 4-0 | Furness 2, Bailey, Linnett |

**October**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4 Coventry Utd | 2-1 | Thestrup, Lawley |
| 11 Leicester | 1-2 | Clarke |

**November**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Lewes | 2-2 | Thestrup, Babajide |
| 8 SHEFFIELD UTD | 1-0 | Babajide |
| 15 Blackburn | 0-0 | |

**December**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 6 CRYSTAL PALACE | 4-0 | Babajide 2, Rodgers, Thestrup |
| 13 London City | 1-0 | Moore |
| 20 Durham | 0-2 | |

**January**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 17 LEICESTER | 1-2 | Kearns |

**February**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7 Charlton Ath | 2-2 | Furness, Holland |
| 28 LONDON BEES | 3-0 | Jane, Holland, Rodgers |

**March**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7 Crystal Palace | 1-0 | Fahey |
| 14 COVENTRY UTD | 5-0 | Fahey 2, Holland, Jane, Lawley |
| 28 BLACKBURN | 1-1 | Kearns |

**April**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4 LEWES | 2-0 | Moore, OG |
| 25 Sheffield Utd | 1-0 | Thestrup |

**May**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 LONDON CITY | 2-2 | Jane, Rodgers |

## CONTINENTAL CUP

**October**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7 MAN UTD | 3-1 | Furness 2, Babajide |

**November**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 8 MAN CITY | 0-3 | |
| 18 Everton | 0-1 | |

## FA WOMEN'S CUP

**April**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 18 Leicester | 0-1 | |

### FA WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL TABLE

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | GD | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LEICESTER | 20 | 16 | 2 | 2 | 54 | 16 | 38 | 50 |
| DURHAM | 20 | 12 | 6 | 2 | 34 | 15 | 19 | 42 |
| LIVERPOOL | 20 | 11 | 6 | 3 | 37 | 15 | 22 | 39 |
| SHEFFIELD UTD | 20 | 11 | 5 | 4 | 37 | 15 | 22 | 38 |
| LEWES | 20 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 19 | 22 | -3 | 28 |
| LONDON CITY | 20 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 19 | 19 | 0 | 24 |
| CRYSTAL PALACE | 20 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 27 | 36 | -9 | 20 |
| CHARLTON | 20 | 4 | 7 | 9 | 19 | 29 | -10 | 19 |
| BLACKBURN | 20 | 4 | 6 | 10 | 20 | 31 | -11 | 18 |
| COVENTRY UTD | 20 | 5 | 1 | 14 | 21 | 51 | -30 | 16 |
| LONDON BEES | 20 | 3 | 2 | 15 | 14 | 52 | -38 | 11 |

**APPEARANCES (ALL COMPS)**

24 – Taylor Hinds; 23 – Niamh Fahey, Melissa Lawley; 23 – Rhiannon Roberts; 21 – Amalie Thestrup; 19 – Rachel Furness, Missy Bo Kearns, Rachael Laws; 18 – Meikayla Moore; 17 – Leighanne Robe; 16 - Becky Jane, Amy Rodgers; 15 – Rinsola Babajide, Jade Bailey, Kirsty Linnett; 14 – Ashley Hodson; 12 – Jess Clarke; 8 – Ceri Holland, Lucy Parry; 6 – Rylee Foster; 1 – Emily Brough, Mia Ross.

**GOALS (ALL COMPS)**

7 – Rachel Furness; 6 – Rinsola Babajide; 4 – Amalie Thestrup; 3 – Niamh Fahey, Ceri Holland, Melissa Lawley; 3 – Becky Jane, Amy Rodgers; 2 - Missy Bo Kearns, Meikayla Moore; 1 – Jade Bailey, Jess Clarke, Kirsty Linnett.

WHAT'S ON

MAY / JUN

# FAN-FARE FINISH

**The Reds have a handful of big games coming up this month as they aim to secure a highest-possible finish and qualification for next season's European tournaments.**

Four of the five fixtures are against sides they failed to beat earlier in the season. Southampton arrive at Anfield on Saturday 8 May looking for a repeat of their victory in the first game of 2021 at St Mary's, courtesy of Danny Ings' opportunist early strike.

The Reds then make trips to West Bromwich Albion and Burnley looking to improve on their results at Anfield this season. Liverpool were held by the Baggies just after Christmas, before losing their 68-game unbeaten Premier League home record against the Clarets in January.

The re-arranged game against Manchester United was still to be confirmed as this magazine went to press. The sides played out a goalless draw at Anfield in January.

The curtain comes down on the season against Crystal Palace on Sunday 23 May. The Reds are looking forward to welcoming 10,000 fans back inside Anfield for the visit of Roy Hodgson's side. It will be the first time supporters have been admitted since that draw with West Brom back in December.


POOL FC
ER WALK ALONE
L.F.C.

MAY/JUN

# WHAT'S ON

# EYES ON THE PRIZE

**Liverpool's Under-18s will continue their quest to win the club's fifth FA Youth Cup when they take on Ipswich Town in the semi-finals this month.**

Should Marc Bridge-Wilkinson's side be successful in Suffolk they will visit Aston Villa or West Bromwich Albion in a one-legged final, set to be played at Villa Park or the Hawthorns on Saturday 29 May.

The young Reds have so far overcome Sutton United, Manchester United, Leicester City and Arsenal to reach the final four. Turn back to pages 82 to 85 of this issue to find out how they did it.

ALL THOSE YEARS AGO...

## ANNIVERSARIES

**2** years since being crowned champions of Europe for the sixth time on 1 June 2019.
**16** years since the Miracle of Istanbul, against Milan, on 25/26 May 2005.
**20** years since the Reds completed that historic cup treble on 16 May 2001.
**37** years since Liverpool claimed their fourth European Cup on 30 May 1984.
**40** years since Alan Kennedy gave us European Cup no3 on 27 May 1981.
**43** years since Liverpool claimed their second European Cup on 10 May 1978.
**44** years since Liverpool claimed their first European Cup on 25 May 1977.
**129** years since Liverpool Football Club was born on 3 June 1892.

**And it's 15 years since the Reds' last FA Cup triumph, against West Ham United on 13 May 2006...**

It seems hard to believe that it will soon be a decade-and-a-half since Liverpool last lifted the FA Cup. Just a year after that incredible Champions League night in Istanbul, the Reds put their fans' emotions through the mill again, remarkably winning another final via a penalty shoot-out after a 3-3 draw!

West Ham were Liverpool's opponents in the final at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff as Rafael Benitez's side went in search of further success.

Half-an-hour in, though, Kopites again had that sinking feeling as a Jamie Carragher own-goal was quickly followed by a strike from Hammers forward Dean Ashton to leave Liverpool 2-0 down.

Djibril Cisse gave the Reds a lifeline with a 32nd-minute strike and when skipper Steven Gerrard volleyed home an equaliser nine minutes after the interval, everything seemed to be back on track.

However, future Liverpool full-back Paul Konchesky restored West Ham's lead when he somehow defeated goalkeeper Pepe Reina with a cross-cum-shot from the left flank.

Alan Pardew's side were just seconds from glory when the ball fell to Gerrard 35 yards from goal. He later admitted that his energy levels were so sapped he decided to shoot rather than run forward. And what a shot – it flew past Hammers keeper Shaka Hislop and into the bottom corner of the net for one of the best-ever goals in an FA Cup final.

That sent the game into extra-time and, with no further scoring in the additional half-hour, the outcome was decided from the spot.

Reina was Liverpool's hero, saving from Bobby Zamora, Konchesky and Anton Ferdinand as the Reds won the shoot-out-out 3-1, enabling Gerrard to lift another piece of sparkling silverware.






## BIRTHDAYS

Adam Lallana 33 on 10 May
Kostas Tsimikas 25 on 12 May
Howard Gayle 63 on 18 May
Jimmy Case 67 on 18 May
Torben Piechnik 58 on 21 May
Joe Gomez 24 on 23 May
Nicky Tanner 56 on 24 May
Vladimir Smicer 48 on 24 May
Steven Gerrard 41 on 30 May
Mark Lawrenson 64 on 2 June
Meikayla Moore 25 on 4 June
Javier Mascherano 37 on 8 June



# WHAT'S IN



**WOMENS VINTAGE RED LAUNDERED ZIP THROUGH HOODY**
£50

**WOMENS STONE LAUNDERED CREW NECK SWEAT**
£40

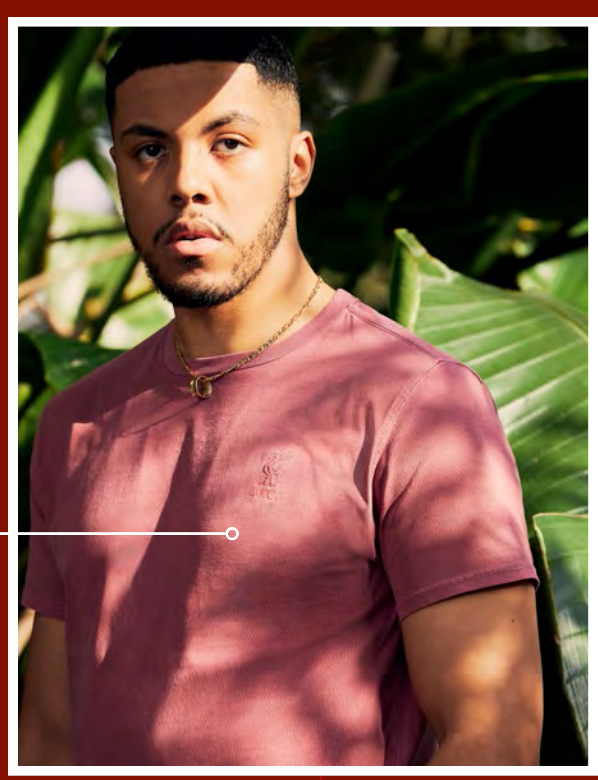
**JUNIOR RED CAMO TEE**
£12

# STORE

JUST SOME OF THE EXCLUSIVE APPAREL FROM THE SUMMER 2021 COLLECTION FOR ADULTS AND JUNIORS



**MENS GREY MARL CAMO TEE**
£22



**MENS VINTAGE RED LAUNDERED T-SHIRT**
£30



**MENS DENIM LAUNDERED ZIP THROUGH HOODY**
£55



**MENS STONE LAUNDERED POLO**
£40

**Shop for all your Liverpool FC essentials in Official Club Stores and at liverpoolfc.com/store and for more details follow @LFCRetail on Twitter and Instagram! Terms and conditions apply.**



# Results & Fixtures 2020/21

| AUGUST | | SCORE | TV | SCORERS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sat 29 | Arsenal (CS, N) | 1-1* | BT | Minamino (pens: Salah, Fabinho, Minamino, Jones) |
| **SEPTEMBER** | | | | |
| **Sat 12** | **Leeds United (H)** | **4-3** | **Sky** | **Salah 3 (2 pens), Van Dijk** |
| Sun 20 | Chelsea (A) | 2-0 | Sky | Mane 2 |
| Thu 24 | Lincoln City (Carabao Cup 3, A) | 7-2 | Sky | Shaqiri, Minamino 2, Jones 2, Grujic, Origi |
| **Mon 28** | **Arsenal (H)** | **3-1** | **Sky** | **Mane, Robertson, Jota** |
| **OCTOBER** | | | | |
| **Thu 01** | **Arsenal (Carabao Cup 4, H)** | **0-0*** | **Sky** | **(pens: Milner, Wijnaldum, Minamino, Jones)** |
| Sun 04 | Aston Villa (A) | 2-7 | Sky | Salah 2 |
| Sat 17 | Everton (A) | 2-2 | BT | Mane, Salah |
| Wed 21 | Ajax (UCL Matchday 1, A) | 1-0 | BT | Tagliafico (OG) |
| **Sat 24** | **Sheffield United (H)** | **2-1** | **Sky BO** | **Firmino, Jota** |
| **Tue 27** | **FC Midtjylland (UCL Matchday 2, H)** | **2-0** | **BT** | **Jota, Salah (pen)** |
| **Sat 31** | **West Ham United (H)** | **2-1** | **Sky** | **Salah (pen), Jota** |
| **NOVEMBER** | | | | |
| Tue 03 | Atalanta (UCL Matchday 3, A) | 5-0 | BT | Jota 3, Salah, Mane |
| Sun 08 | Manchester City (A) | 1-1 | Sky | Salah (pen) |
| **Sat 21** | **Leicester City (H)** | **3-0** | **Sky** | **Evans (OG), Jota, Firmino** |
| **Wed 25** | **Atalanta (UCL Matchday 4, H)** | **0-2** | **BT** | |
| Sat 28 | Brighton & Hove Albion (A) | 1-1 | BT | Jota |
| **DECEMBER** | | | | |
| **Tue 01** | **Ajax (UCL Matchday 5, H)** | **1-0** | **BT** | **Jones** |
| **Sun 06** | **Wolverhampton Wanderers (H)** | **4-0** | **AP** | **Salah, Wijnaldum, Matip, Semedo (OG)** |
| Wed 09 | FC Midtjylland (UCL Matchday 6, A) | 1-1 | BT | Salah |
| Sun 13 | Fulham (A) | 1-1 | Sky | Salah (pen) |
| **Wed 16** | **Tottenham Hotspur (H)** | **2-1** | **AP** | **Salah, Firmino** |
| Sat 19 | Crystal Palace (A) | 7-0 | BT | Firmino 2, Salah 2, Minamino, Mane, Henderson |
| **Sun 27** | **West Bromwich Albion (H)** | **1-1** | **Sky** | **Mane** |
| Wed 30 | Newcastle United (A) | 0-0 | AP | |
| **JANUARY** | | | | |
| Mon 04 | Southampton (A) | 0-1 | Sky | |
| Fri 08 | Aston Villa (FA Cup 3, A) | 4-1 | BT | Mane 2, Wjnaldum, Salah |
| **Sun 17** | **Manchester United (H)** | **0-0** | **Sky** | |
| **Thu 21** | **Burnley (H)** | **0-1** | **Sky** | |
| Sat 23 | Manchester United (FA Cup 4, A) | 2-3 | BBC | Salah 2 |
| Thu 28 | Tottenham Hotspur (A) | 3-1 | BT | Firmino, Alexander-Arnold, Mane |
| Sun 31 | West Ham United (A) | 3-1 | Sky | Salah 2, Wijnaldum |
| **FEBRUARY** | | | | |
| **Wed 03** | **Brighton & Hove Albion (H)** | **0-1** | **BT** | |
| **Sun 07** | **Manchester City (H)** | **1-4** | **Sky** | **Salah (pen)** |
| Sat 13 | Leicester City (A) | 1-3 | BT | Salah |
| Tue 16 | RB Leipzig (UCL R of 16 1 A) | 2-0 | BT | Salah, Mane |
| **Sat 20** | **Everton (H)** | **0-2** | **Sky** | |
| Sun 28 | Sheffield United (A) | 2-0 | Sky | Jones, Bryan (OG) |
| **MARCH** | | | | |
| **Thu 04** | **Chelsea (H)** | **0-1** | **Sky** | **Sky** |
| **Sun 07** | **Fulham (H)** | **0-1** | **Sky** | |
| **Wed 10** | **RB Leipzig (UCL R of 16 2 H)** | 2-0 | BT | Salah, Mane |
| Mon 15 | Wolverhampton Wanderers (A) | 1-0 | Sky | Jota |
| **APRIL** | | | | |
| Sat 03 | Arsenal (A) | 3-0 | Sky | Jota 2, Salah |
| Tue 06 | Real Madrid (UCL Q-F 1 A) | 1-3 | BT | Salah |
| **Sat 10** | **Aston Villa (H)** | **2-1** | **Sky** | **Salah, Alexander-Arnold** |
| Wed 14 | Real Madrid (UCL Q-F 2 H) | 0-0 | BT | |
| Mon 19 | Leeds United (A) | 1-1 | Sky | Mane |
| **Sat 24** | **Newcastle United (H)** | **1-1** | **BT** | **Salah** |
| **MAY** | | | | |
| **Sat 08** | **Southampton (H, 8.15pm)** | | **Sky** | |
| Sun 16 | West Bromwich Albion (A, 4.30pm) | | Sky | |
| Tue/Wed 18/19 | Burnley (A, TBC) | | TBC | |
| **Sun 23** | **Crystal Palace (H, 4pm)** | | **TBC** | |
| TBC | Manchester United (A, TBC) | | Sky | |

All fixtures subject to change. *lost 5-4 on pens



# NEIL MELLOR

## Liverpool's FA Youth Cup semi-finalists clearly have the talent – but it's attitude which can make all the difference

**The FA Youth Cup is the best opportunity that young players get to impress the first-team manager and coaching staff. Yes, they are judged on training sessions and in league games, but the Youth Cup is a competition where the pressure is really on you at a club like Liverpool.**

It is the first real cup competition that you play in as a young player. Unfortunately, over the last few seasons, some of the prestige has been lost by playing matches at training and rugby grounds.

The Youth Cup has always been about playing at first-team stadiums to see if the players can handle the added pressure of that environment. That has been diluted in recent times – it was disappointing that the Reds played their third-round tie against Sutton United at The Academy, fourth-round fixture at a rugby ground, Leigh Sports Village, against Manchester United and their fifth-round fixture at Leicester City's training ground – but Marc Bridge-Wilkinson's side finally got the opportunity to play at Anfield when they faced Arsenal in the quarter-final.

They thrived on the pressure with a convincing 3-1 win to create a happy memory for themselves at Anfield. It will give them confidence going into the semi-final against Ipswich Town as Liverpool are now favourites to win the competition for a fifth time.

In the fourth round they beat Manchester United 1-0. A victory like that catches the attention, but you cannot accurately compare the strength of a club's first-team with their Under-18s. Manchester United happen to have the best Under-18s team this season – at the time of writing they are top of their division with Liverpool in third – but it changes every year.

A decade ago, Sheffield United reached the Youth Cup final with Harry Maguire at the back and often you find clubs outside the established 'Big Six' that do well in this competition tend to have one or two diamonds in their side.

Aston Villa are in the other semi-final against West Bromwich Albion and we saw against Liverpool in the FA Cup third round that they have some good players, not least Louie Barry who netted their equaliser.

Liverpool clearly have some talented players and fielded a front-three of James Balagizi, Max Woltman and Mateusz Musialowski in the 3-1 win against Arsenal.

Woltman and Musialowski scored, Balagizi got two assists. They are talented boys, but what you have to remember is that they wouldn't be at Liverpool without talent. It's their attitude that will make all the difference if they are to make the next step to get in and around the first-team.

They, and their team-mates, have to avoid the distractions of agents and all the other people who want a piece of them, along with maybe the biggest distraction nowadays of social media and comparisons to some great players of the past, like they are the next Gerrard or Suarez. They have to focus on who they are as players, listen to the coaching staff and maximise their ability.

Balagizi, who started out at Man City, looks a fantastic player, as does the skilful Musialowski, but there is still a long way to go for both to make it at Liverpool.

It shouldn't be forgotten that Layton Stewart, the U18s' main striker, is out injured, but that has given Woltman a chance and I enjoy watching him. Max works his socks off and his goal against Arsenal was the hallmark of a striker full of confidence and in goalscoring form.

Looking ahead, if Liverpool's players have the right mentality they should win the Youth Cup. I only reached the semi-final of this competition and was devastated when we lost on penalties to Blackburn Rovers in 2001, but the big thing is that winning the Youth Cup gets you noticed.

Jürgen Klopp was at Anfield for the Arsenal game and the U18s need only look at Liverpool's 2019 Youth Cup winners to see where it can lead. Eighteen months after playing in that final success away to Manchester City, Neco Williams and Rhys Williams are in Liverpool's first-team.

The pathway is there and their progress is a reminder to be ready as opportunities often come along in football when you least expect it. When you get a chance at Liverpool, you have to take it.



• Follow Neil on Twitter @NeilMellor33

# STOP THE HATE
# STAND UP
# REPORT IT

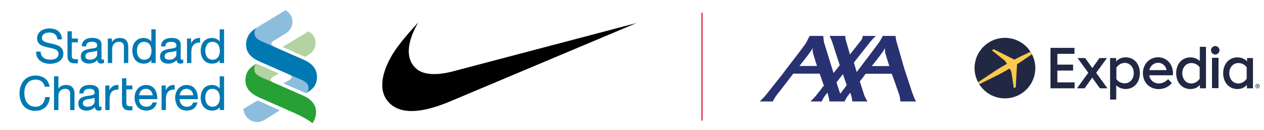
LIVERPOOLFC.COM/REPORTABUSE

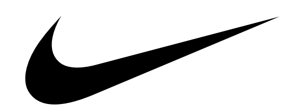
















WE ARE PLEASED TO RECOGNISE THE OFFICIAL PARTNERS OF LIVERPOOL FC























































